TELOS

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Table of Contents

Articles:
HABERMAS: *Dialectics of Rationalization: An Interview*
HABERMAS: *New Social Movements*
BENHABIB: *Modernity and the Aporias of Critical Theory*
LÖWY: *Marxism and Revolutionary Romanticism*
ZERZAN: *Origins and Meaning of World War I*
LANDES: *Feminism and the Internationals*

Notes and Commentary:
BUHLE: *E.P. Thompson and His Critics*
KOGAWA: *Japan as a Manipulated Society*
LOWENTHAL: *Origins of Critical Theory: An Interview*
FREESE: *On Benjamin and Brecht*
MERAKLIA: *Bulgaria: The Taiwan of Eastern Europe*
LUDES: *On Kurt H. Wolff*

Reviews:
SICA: Finocchiaro, *Galileo and the Art of Reasoning*
COHEN: Thompson, *The Poverty of Theory*
RÉE: Ringer, *Education and Society in Modern Europe*
JACOBY: Friedman, *Frankfurt School Political Philosophy*
BREINES: Geoghegan, *Reason and Eros*
FINOCCHIARO: Labriola, *Socialism and Philosophy*
MAHAIRA-ODONI: *Three Books on Sartre*
ARONSON: Glucksmann, *The Master Thinkers*
ROELOFS: Carnoy and Shearer, *Economic Democracy*
SCRIVENER: Wilding, *Political Fiction*
KIM: Moore, *Marx and the Socialism-Communism Choice*
PETRUSEWICZ: Singer, *The Road to Gdansk*
SHORT JOURNAL REVIEWS

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TELOS

a quarterly journal of radical thought

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction 3
Paul Piccone

ARTICLES:

The Dialectics of Rationalization: An Interview with Jürgen Habermas 5
Axel Honneth, Eberhard Knödler-Bunte, and Arno Widmann

New Social Movements 33
Jürgen Habermas

Modernity and the Aporias of Critical Theory 38
Seyla Benhabib

The Effective Power of Art: On Benjamin's Aesthetics 61
Sandor Radnoti

Marxism and Revolutionary Romanticism 83
Michael Löwy

Origins and Meaning of World War I 97
John Zerzan

Feminism and the Internationals 117
Joan Landes

NOTES AND COMMENTARY:

E.P. Thompson and his Critics 127
Paul Buhle

Japan as a Manipulated Society 138
Tetsuo Kogawa

The Origins of Critical Theory: An Interview with Leo Lowenthal 141
Helmut Dubiel

On Benjamin and Brecht 155
Wolfgang Freese

Demand 22: A Song-Poem from the Gdansk Shipyards 172

Bulgaria: The Taiwan of Eastern Europe 173
Meraklia

REVIEWS:

Maurice Finocchiaro, *Galileo and the Art of Reasoning* 181
Alan Sica

Edward P. Thompson, *The Poverty of Theory and Other Essays* 189
Jean L. Cohen

Fritz K. Ringer, *Education and Society in Modern Europe* 197
Jonathan Rée

George Friedman, *The Political Philosophy of the Frankfurt School* 203
Russell Jacoby

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ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Vincent Geoghegan, *Reason and Eros: The Social Theory of Herbert Marcuse* 206
Paul Breines
Antonio Labriola, *Socialism and Philosophy* 209
Maurice Finocchiaro
Peter Caws, *Sartre*
Douglas Collins, *Sartre as a Biographer*
Gila J. Hayim, *The Existential Sociology of Jean-Paul Sartre* 212
Eleni Mahaira-Odoni
André Glucksmann, *The Master Thinkers* 216
Ronald Aronson
Martin Carnoy and Derek Shearer, *Economic Democracy: Challenge of the '80s* ...218
Joan Roelofs
Michael Wilding, *Political Fictions* 223
Michael Scrivener
Stanley Moore, *Marx on the Choice between Socialism and Communism* 227
Sang-ki Kim
Daniel Singer, *The Road to Gdansk* 229
Marta Petrusewicz
Short Journal Reviews 234

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INTRODUCTION

Relations between critical theory and the independent Left have not always been the most cordial. Especially after the catastrophic "rediscovery" of Marxism-Leninism more than a decade ago, the disintegration of the New Left has paralleled its growing distance from critical theory. With the development — especially in Germany — of new social movements independent of any traditional class politics and the publication of more immediately political analyses by Habermas and his associates in Starnberg, a *rapprochement* may be possible. In a long interview-discussion with Habermas, Knödler-Bunte, Axel Honneth and Arno Widmann try to confront this history while probing Habermas' new book, *Theorie des kommunikativen Handeln*, Vol. II. Although the German New Left has come a long way from its crypto-Maoism of the early 1970s, the thrust of the questions — especially near the end of the interview — still betrays a lingering nostalgia for the good old-fashioned class struggle in the attempt to see all new developments as possible catalysts for a resurgence of proletarian militancy. Habermas, of course, politely sidesteps such efforts to reinterpret his analyses of rationalization processes in this fashion and indicates how his communication theory is now being extended to cover the dynamics within the life-world. While provocative and original, these new insights seem caught in a paradox. On the one hand, Habermas recognizes that the life-world is pre-conceptual and thus beyond the grasp of linguistic discourse (something some of his interviewers do not seem to understand). On the other hand, however, he also wants to analyze ecological crises and problems associated with unrestrained economic growth as resulting in the disruption of communicative networks necessary for reproduction. While the disruption is real, it is not a matter merely of communication networks but of living, pre-communicative relations in the life-world. Thus, his latest insights strain both the communication theory as well as the neo-Kantianism within which it is articulated. It remains to be seen whether these anomalies will necessitate a new turn away from linguistics.

In a similar vein, Benhabib outlines some of the major problems with the first generation of critical theorists and shows how the second generation — primarily Habermas — has dealt with them by regrounding the theory within a completely different linguistic framework. But in so doing, a new set of problems has come up. Although unfamiliar with Habermas' latest book, Benhabib indicates why Habermas may have to start dealing with social movements in the way that he seems (judging from the interview) to be doing. At any rate, this account provides a critical reconstruction of the theoretical trajectory leading to Habermas' latest work.

A chapter out of a recent book in German dealing with Lowenthal's biography in the form of long interviews recalls the socio-historical and personal context out of which critical theory developed in the 1930s and changed in response to the growing threates of Nazism and Stalinism. This setting-straight of the record is all the more needed today in the face of a growing attack in critical theory in establishment publications on the basis of not only the routine misreadings from scientistic-academic viewpoints (e.g., that of Friedman), but also by worn-out cold warriors (e.g., Feuer) who should know better. In this context, book reviews by Jacoby and Breines tackle recent interpretations of critical theory whose value is not always immediately evident.

To complete the material dealing with general themes in critical theory, this issue includes another chapter from Radnoti's book, originally written in Hungarian, on

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Benjamin — two other chapters have appeared in earlier issues — and a long note by Freese on the relation between Benjamin and Brecht. Although much discussed recently, the thrust of Benjamin's work remains mired in a Marxist vs. anti-Marxist context that ends up losing the most original features of this perspective. Further elaboration along these lines may eventually break such a sterile deadlock and salvage Benjamin's heritage for new developments in critical theory.

Other articles by Löwy, Zerzan and Landes deal with the relation of romanticism and Marxism, the depoliticizing and normalizing effects of World War I in checkmating working class militancy, and the troubled interaction between early feminism and the Internationals. While most "scientific" Marxists tend to de-emphasize the romantic roots of Marxism as left-overs from Marx's philosophical youth or, at any rate, as dubious conservative elements, Löwy argues that, without this romantic dimension, Marxism loses its revolutionary essence and deteriorates to the level of another rationalizing ideology with dangerous totalitarian leanings. The same issues appear again in Buhle's portrait of E.P. Thompson — one of the most outspoken defenders of the romantic heritage as the revolutionary aspect of Marxism. In examining how this perspective has come under attack from the dogmatic and authoritarian Left, Cohen elsewhere shows the political superiority of this approach to contemporary European realities. But Cohen goes much further and points out how the insistence on articulating this political perspective within an obsolete and wooden Marxist theoretical framework ultimately restricts it needlessly and leads to a loss of vision.

Additional contributions by Kogawa and Meraklia provide brief sketches of some major problems with Japanese and Bulgarian societies. In the review section Sica carefully dissects an excellent example of scholarship gone berserk in re-interpreting Galileo; Rée evaluates Ringer's book on education; Finocchiaro discusses Labriola's contribution to Italian Marxism as a version from both Second as well as Third International Marxisms; Mahaira-Odoni and Aronson examine several new books on Sartre; Roelofs and Kim tackle two works discussing models of socialism and their possible realization; Scrivener ridicules a recent example of orthodox Marxist misinterpretation of literature; and Petrusewicz reviews an informative book on Poland which, unfortunately, does not seem to go anywhere.

Future special issues will deal with ecology, religion and politics, French politics, and state terrorism.

Paul Piccone

Screen the major UK quarterly journal of film theory and criticism has changed its design format. The policy of the new style magazine is to develop writing emphasising current issues in film and television culture as well as to continue **Screen's** long-standing commitment to theoretical work on media representations. The extended range and style of articles are intended to be of interest to anyone involved in cultural work including film-makers and media teachers.

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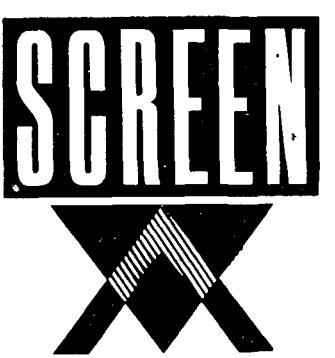

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THE DIALECTICS OF RATIONALIZATION: An Interview with Jürgen Habermas*

by Axel Honneth, Eberhard Knödler-Bunte and Arno Widmann

The Tradition of Critical Theory

Honneth: "To begin with, I shall summarize the topics we would like to address: First, we want to concentrate on your position within the tradition of critical theory in order to, second, examine its deficiencies as you see them. The third and more systematic theme concerns the basic features of your theory, as developed in your latest book. I'm sure that will become very difficult once we have the comprehensive manuscript before us. In the fourth part our interest switches to the application of the theory to present-day political problems and conflicts. Finally, we'll want to address questions such as science as a vocation, the turning of Marxism and social theory into academic disciplines, and problems of modes of production of critical theory. How can Marxism, which is caught up in an academic system, protect itself against the dangerous loss of experience and academic complacency? In other words: how can we rationally pursue critical scholarship today?"

Habermas: "That's not very clear to me either."

Honneth: "Because of your publications you are perceived as the modern representative of critical theory. Do you accept this characterization?"

Habermas: "I've always felt myself over-estimated. After all, it was the older generation who produced critical theory in the 1930s. Lukacs led me to the young Marx. Adorno played, shall we say, an absolutely electrifying role. It was he who taught me that one need not restrict oneself to an historical approach to Marx."

Knödler-Bunte: "But wasn't that really a philosophical reading of Marx?"

Habermas: "Neither an historicized Marx nor the theory of capitalism was of much importance to me at that time, in the 1950s, but rather the Marx of the *Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts*, the *Grundrisse* — Marx as the theoretician of reification. Of course, there were also Lukacs and Korsch. I didn't take Marx seriously as an economist until 1958, when I read Sweezy's *Theory of Capitalist Development*. Adorno always said, and this is a typically philosophical attitude toward the text: secondary literature is irrelevant. He considered Marx and Freud as classics. He also led me to stop reading Marx from an 'anthropological' perspective. But, of course, I never considered Marx primarily an economist. He was also a political theorist who took up the traditions of bourgeois revolutions and their theoretical treatments from the Jacobins to Thomas Paine.

"Naturally, one can remain in such traditions only if one criticizes and transforms them. That is a hermeneutic commonplace. The traditions that

*The following is part of a discussion held on May 22, 1981, in Berlin, and July 10, in Starnberg. The complete text has appeared in *Aesthetik und Kommunikation*, 45-46 (October 1981), pp. 126-162. English translation by Leslie Adelson, Philip Boehm, Barton Byg, Karen Jankowski and Istvan Varkonyi.

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survive are only those which change in order to fit new situations. This also concerns my relation to the older Frankfurt Circle. I am more than a generation younger than the 'old ones,' if I may put it that way, and also come from a different background. For example, I am the first one who is not Jewish, who grew up in Nazi Germany and who experienced the fall of fascism quite differently than the others. From this background alone it is not possible to have an unbroken identification with critical theory. Besides, when I became Adorno's assistant in 1956, the intellectual past of the Institute for Social Research was not accessible to the new students."

Honneth: "What traditions were alive then, if the critical theory of the '30s was as good as unknown?"

Habermas: "My philosophical and literary reaction at that time was to the left traditions of the '20s. For example, I read Lukacs very early in the course of my studies, although that wasn't yet popular at the time. The turning point came with the young Hegelian critique as interpreted by Löwith in an intellectual-historical but nonetheless extremely illuminating manner. The insights of the young Hegelian critique into that which sustains us all, into everything which took place between Kant and Hegel, including Hölderlin, were exciting. In retrospect, I sometimes have the impression that a student can recreate a segment of the critical theory of the '30s if he systematically works his way from Kant through Hegel, including Schelling, and then approaches Marx via Lukacs. I wouldn't want that understood as arrogance. If one were then confronted with Adorno in the late '50s and did not just read his writings but also heard him speak of Durkheim, Hegel and Freud, one could easily uncover the origins of this way of thinking, even without knowing the *Zeitschrift für Sozialforschung*. When this sunken continent later resurfaced — in the 1960s with the student protests — and entered the consciousness of us former assistants at the institute, I didn't have the impression that what was occurring was entirely new."

Widmann: "When you got to Frankfurt didn't you sit down and look up the old papers in the Institute for Social Research?"

Habermas: "But they didn't exist."

Knödler-Bunte: "There was the *Zeitschrift* with the old essays..."

Habermas: "That didn't exist. Horkheimer had a great fear that we would get to the crate in the institute's cellar that contained a complete set of the *Zeitschrift*. Had we had a strong desire to, however, we would have been able to read all of it. I was told at the time, and it was true, that it could have been obtained from Carlo Schmidt at the institute."

Knödler-Bunte: "How did you actually get to Frankfurt and what did you find there?"

Habermas: "When I arrived in Frankfurt, it struck me that Adorno and Horkheimer did not pay much attention to contemporary philosophy, which I had studied in Bonn. I never got the impression from Adorno that he had read Heidegger intensively. I don't know even today whether he just read isolated sentences. This selectivity — there was no Jaspers, no phenomenology — was something exotic. Only in the late 1970s, after

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Adorno's death, as I read his inaugural lecture and the essay on natural history, did it become clear to me how much Adorno as a young man had really had in his mind. Subjectively, I saw myself as someone who, in the face of a very narrow, almost dogmatic selection of acceptable texts, carried on philosophical and academic traditions in a less strict manner. Because of my — let us say — more systematic approach, I was also considered by my contemporaries in the philosophical seminar as a kind of foreigner. In addition, it became clear to me that the 1920s, in which I had theoretically lived during my student years, were, after all, the 1920s. That became a stimulus to become interested in American sociology, for example. Analytical philosophy came afterward. Categories such as 'bourgeois science' never meant much for me. In an established science there are either useful things or less useful ones. In principle, I considered worthwhile anything that had a cognitive, structural or hermeneutical element — anything that would allow one to open up subjects from the inside out."

Honneth: "What was the source of your — even pre-theoretical — affinity to critical theory?"

Habermas: "As I mentioned, I had read Lukacs. Inspired by the young Hegelians, I looked at the transition from Kant to 'objective' idealism with great interest. Alongside all this were my very strong everyday political interests. I had read *History and Class Consciousness* both with fascination and regret that it belonged to the past. Then I read *The Dialectic of Enlightenment* and the first things published by Adorno after the war. That gave me the courage to read Marx systematically and not simply historically. Critical theory, a Frankfurt School — there was no such thing at the time. Reading Adorno had given me the courage to take up systematically what Lukacs and Korsch represented historically: the theory of reification as a theory of rationalization, in Max Weber's sense. Already at that time, my problem was a theory of modernism, a theory of the pathology of modernism, from the viewpoint of the realization — the deformed realization — of reason in history. So, naturally, *The Dialectic of Enlightenment* became a key. When I met Adorno and saw how he spoke breathtakingly about commodity fetishism and applied this concept to cultural and everyday phenomena, at first it was a shock. But then I thought: Try to act as if Marx and Freud, about whom Adorno spoke with the same orthodoxy, *were contemporaries.*"

Knödler-Bunte: "Where then did you see the deficiencies of critical theory?"

Habermas: "I didn't think of it that way at the time. For me there was no critical theory, no connecting doctrine. Adorno wrote critical essays on culture and held seminars on Hegel. He made contemporary a certain Marxist background. That was it. Only some clever young people in the late 1960s discovered early critical theory and made it clearer in my mind that a theory of society should be systematic. In retrospect, what appear to me to be weaknesses in critical theory can be categorized under the labels of 'normative foundations,' 'concept of truth and its relation to scientific disciplines' and 'underestimation of the democratic and constitutional traditions of a legal state.' With questions about the foundations one naturally became unpopular in all

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circles oriented to Adorno.

"In the 1930s the old Frankfurt Circle still explicitly subscribed to a concept of reason and developed it according to the philosophy of history. This was done in terms of an ideologically critical appropriation of bourgeois philosophy. We find that in Horkheimer's book on the beginnings of bourgeois philosophy of history, and above all in the many essays in the *Zeitschrift,* including the articles by Marcuse and Horkheimer in 1937, in which the two argue that bourgeois ideals, with certain limitations, are present in art as well as philosophy, survive as potentials. They could appeal to these potentials because, as Marxist social theorists, they could rely on political groups within the European working class movement — if not the proletariat in the Lukacsian sense — to unleash and historically realize the rational potential of bourgeois society as a result of the ongoing development of the forces of production. This I call the philosophical historical concept of reason.

"In the 1930s, doubts began to arise about this among the Frankfurt theorists, and the results emerged in *The Dialectic of Enlightenment* and *The Eclipse of Reason.* What I consider Adorno's greatness in the philosophy of history is the fact that he was the only one to remorselessly face and spell out the paradoxes of this form of theory construction, of the dialectic of enlightenment that unfolds the whole as the untrue. In this sense of critical insistence, he was one of the most systematic and effective thinkers I know of. Of course, one can draw various conclusions from the results. Either one presses on in the illuminating exercise of negative philosophy to the self-sustaining conclusion that, if a spark of reason is left, then it is to be found in esoteric art. Or, on the other hand, one takes a step back and says to oneself: Adorno has shown that one must go back to a stage before the dialectic of enlightenment because, as a scholar, one cannot live with the paradoxes of a self-negating philosophy. If one takes Adorno's *Negative Dialektik* and *Aesthetische Theorie* seriously and accepts them, and if one then wishes to withdraw just one step from this scene out of Beckett, then one has to become somewhat of a post-structuralist to conceptualize it. Adorno never took this step. He would have considered it a betrayal of the rational heritage of critical theory. I don't think it is possible any more for critical theory in its purest form to refer to any form of empirical or even discursive analysis of social conditions.

"This is related to the second point of criticism, the philosophical concept of truth adopted from Hegel, which the Frankfurt School never abandoned and which is irreconcilable with the fallibility of academic endeavor.

"The third point has become very relevant to me. On the level of political theory, the old Frankfurt School never took bourgeois democracy very seriously. Those are the three most important deficiencies of the Frankfurt School as I see them today."

Deficiencies of Critical Theory

Honneth: "I think we should move from these systematic deficiencies in the tradition of critical theory to how you have approached these three areas in order to overcome them. Thus, the question is: how have you alleviated the

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normative deficiencies of critical theory? In what way have you transformed the concept of truth? How have you evaluated differently the achievements of bourgeois democracy? By what means is it possible to improve on these three levels?"

Habermas: "Well, here I can only give some programmatic explanations. For the central intuition that I hope to have clarified somewhat in my *Theorie des kommunikativen Handelns*, I am indebted to a reception of both the hermeneutic and the analytic strains of linguistic theory and, one could say, to a reading of Humboldt with the insight of analytic philosophy. This is the intuition that a *telos* of mutual understanding is built into linguistic communication. Along this path one comes to the concept of communicative rationality which, by the way, is also at the basis of Adorno's less affirmative utterances concerning the not unsuccessful [*nicht-verfehltes*] life. When in *Minima Moralia* Adorno actually tries to explain what he means by a mimetic association not only with nature but also among people, he refers to Eichendorff's "distant nearness." So he returns to categories of intersubjectivity from which he philosophically abstains. So far this is an attempt to solidify a concept of reason by means of formal pragmatics, that is, by means of an analysis of the general characteristics of communication-oriented behavior. Naturally, that can only be a first step. The next step is to make the concept of communicative rationality applicable to social conditions, to institutionalized *loci* of interaction. Here one must be careful to avoid the pitfalls of foundationalism or linguistic transcendentalism. In the introduction to the *Kritik der politischen Oekonomie* of 1857, Marx established in what sense the category of labor is a universal concept applicable to all societies. He shows that only to the extent that the capitalist means of production has become established are the objective conditions fulfilled that allow him, Marx, access to an understanding of the universal character of this category 'labor.'

"Regarding such a theory of communication, one must use the same method to clarify how late capitalism has objectively fulfilled conditions that allow us to recognize universals in the structures of linguistic communication providing criteria for a critique which can no longer be based on the philosophy of history."

Honneth: "Therefore, the categorical means of alleviating the normative deficiency of critical theory is a concept of communicative understanding based on linguistic theory?"

Habermas: "Yes, and now to the second point. I believe the Frankfurt School clung to a concept of theory — a concept of truth — that was based on the emphatic concept of reason in the philosophical tradition. This is the same concept that reappears in an ironic fashion in the formulation 'instrumental reason.' 'Reason' is not meant to apply simply to intended truth, in the narrow sense in which we speak of the truth of utterances. Rather, reason should reveal the unity of the aspects of reason separated in all three Kantian critiques: it is the unity of theoretical reason with practical-moral insight and aesthetic judgment.

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"In science and, in this framework, philosophy, one has only to confront truth claims in the narrower sense. This generates a dilemma. On the one hand, the conceptions of emphatic theory are to correspond to 'truths' from which the moral and aesthetic-expressive aspects have not yet been split off. On the other hand, a critical social theory must also proceed scientifically: it can only make pronouncements with a claim of propositional truth. This is now yet another formulation of the awkwardness that Hegelianizing social scientists have felt in relation to empirical procedures. If one doesn't follow Adorno towards a 'negative dialectics,' which is a renunciation of the social sciences, it becomes necessary to use theories that specialize in questions of truth in the narrow sense. In this case, one must then see how it is possible, within the social sciences and, by all means, in the formation of philosophical theory, to bring into play the realms of experience of both the aesthetic-expressive and moral aspects without empiricist redefinitions and without endangering the requirements of theoretical descriptions. That is the problem of *non-positivist approaches to theory in the social sciences*. Hermeneutic approaches ensure the connection to the realm of experience of everyday communicative praxis, which is virtually defined by the lack of differentiation between questions of truth, justice and taste (if you don't mind the Kantian divisions).

"Freud's theory is another example. This finds inspiration in a concept of 'consciousness' or 'ego' — thus 'conscious control of drives,' 'ego strength,' and so on — which cannot be explained without simultaneously examining the moral elements of Kant's (or Hegel's) concept of autonomy; especially not without referring to aesthetic-expressive elements of an 'id-become ego.'

"Just as non-objectivist research methods within the humanities emphasize new aspects of the moral and aesthetic critique without endangering the primacy of basic questions of truth, we can find a similar counter-movement in ethics and aesthetics. Of course, cognitive ethics exclude problems of the good life, and reduce what is good to what is merely just. But the discussion of ethics of responsibility and of conviction, and the more serious consideration of hedonistic factors, in turn bring into play viewpoints of the calculation of consequences and interpretation of needs, which lie in the realm of the cognitive and the expressive. Art, too, which has become autonomous, presses to provide an increasingly pure expression of basic aesthetic experiences. Today, however, post-avant garde art is characterized by the curious combination of realistic and politically engaged tendencies, with forms of the authentic continuation of the classic modernism which had established the obstinacy of the aesthetic. Thus, realistic and engagé art forms raise cognitive and moral-practical factors to the level of richness of form, liberated by the avant garde. It seems as if such movements, which run counter to the radical singlemindedness of differentiated moments of reason suggest once again a unity. This unity can be acquired only this side of the culture of experts — in a non-deformed daily practice.

"The third deficiency — the theory of democracy — deals with questions of

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developmental logics. Here I am simply of the opinion that one can show that the formal features of bourgeois systems of law and constitution, or of bourgeois political institutions in general, demonstrate a conceptual structure of moral-practical thought and interpretation which must be considered superior compared to the built-in moral categories of traditional legal and political institutions."

Knödler-Bunte: "Superior in what sense?"

Habermas: "Superior in view of the ability to answer moral-practical questions. If one reads Marx correctly, one can find certain ideas embodied in the institutions of the bourgeois state which belong to a heritage worthy of preservation in a socialist society. Naturally, one can say that the horizon, from which the old critical theory derived its perception of contemporary history, was so gloomy that nothing remained of anything that could be advertised as reason or — if you like — as utopian in Bloch's sense."

Knödler-Bunte: "Today, on the other hand, the critique of instrumental reason runs into a situation marked by 'expectations of doom' and catastrophe anxieties present in many movements. Meanwhile, your construction relies on a form of intactness of bourgeois society, at least as far as it should be capable of developing certain structural mechanisms that bear the stamp of rationality. Without speaking philosophically, I believe that there are institutional mechanisms making themselves independent which set a sort of unguided machine into motion, by means of a certain size, or through centralization, or by cutting off or obliterating possibilities for feedback. This in turn brings new risks which E.P. Thompson has called 'exterminism,' the logic of self-annihilation."

Habermas: "Yes, it makes a difference whether or not you see *any* kind of communicative rationality built into daily practice or the life-world or in accepted traditional life styles, whether or not you relinquish the criteria by which you judge these tendencies rendered independent, or if you leave these criteria diffusely in the background. It seems to me that the self-contradictions of reason went so far — from the perspective of the dialectic of enlightenment — that Horkheimer and Adorno (Pollock as well, with his theory of state capitalism) all found political institutions, but social institutions and daily practice as well, completely void of all traces of reason. For them, reason had become utopian in the true sense of the word: it has lost all its locations and thus ushered in the entire problematic of the negative dialectic.

"For the moment, I only want to mention that one should always explicate the conceptual structures used to criticize particulars to avoid falling into trouble when one's viewpoint, criteria, or context is challenged. The older critical theory fell exactly into this difficulty — even if Adorno was later able to fruitfully articulate the dilemma by recognizing it as such and attempting to salvage the particular as the intangible, the injured, the victimized that must fall through the grips of all discursive or identifying thought. Yet, Adorno asked this question in such a way that it no longer made sense to truly analyze concrete social phenomena such as the self-dynamic of armament, economic growth, bureaucratization, etc."

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Honneth: "Even in the Marxist tradition it is not unusual to value the achievements of bourgeois-democratic institutions under the concept of formal democracy. Adorno's perspective, however, is more of a foreign perspective in Marxist theory in that it allows differences among political systems to fade in the face of fascism."
Habermas: "Yes, one could describe that on a scale, to use a positivist device: on the one side are the Second International theorists of continuity, where progress becomes evolutionary in a sense that I wouldn't defend, and on the other side are Benjamin, Bloch, some anarchists — the theorists of total discontinuity. Although I have something against the Aristotelian virtue of moderation and of the mean, I do feel myself drawn to the middle in questions like this. In any case, one has to look at it as an empirical question: in which historical situations could and should stronger communities be preserved alongside a collapsing social formation and in which situations should almost everything be rejected to attain even the smallest step toward emancipation?"

Dialectics of Rationalization
Honneth: "Perhaps I can now ask the global question: how these motifs fit into your book due to appear this fall? How do you tie together the different lines of thought you've been developing for the last ten years in the project of a theory of communicative behavior?"
Knödler-Bunte: "Adorno always used to say on such occasions: Now say that in your own words."
Habermas: "There are essentially four motifs that I have dealt with in this monster. The first motif is an attempt at a theory of rationality. That is especially difficult today, where forms of relativism have had the upper hand under the sign of a dubious revival of Nietzsche (or of irrationalism in general). I may be approaching this problem a little 'too straight,' though certainly in a debate with important counter-arguments. For example, I discuss the rationality debate which took place in England in the early 1970s between some analytic philosophers and anthropologists. One side wanted to strengthen the hypothesis that every culture, every form of life, every language-game, constituted a self-enclosed totality with its own unique criteria of rationality. Following such a discussion I try to provide a more plausible assessment for all those who find the theory of communicative rationality a shocking imputation, who cannot swallow such a prudish word as rationality without turning red. I am also convinced that the time is not favorable for this type of undertaking, since the tragedy Lukacs described as *The Destruction of Reason* now reappears as farce in our liberal cultural weeklies. I develop the second motif (which is not quite so untimely) in the form of a *theory of communicative action,* which I develop in terms of a series of more theoretical problems, such as argumentation theory. Above all, I want to demonstrate that such a beginning with understanding-oriented action is useful for social-theoretical purposes. It did not become clear to me until I was writing — which is why I kept throwing my first drafts away — that Anglo-Saxon discussions about action theory, language theory, and theory of meaning rendered themselves independent as *l'art pour*

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l'art. In the end, one retains wonderful pedantic, conceptually tailored ideas of what social interaction is but has forgotten for what purpose. This occasioned me to stick more closely to the history of theory, for example, to George Herbert Mead's theory of symbolically mediated interaction, in order to show that this pragmatic tradition already contained that concept of rationality. Further, I took up Durkheim and read him from an evolutionary-theoretical viewpoint — which is rather unusual. With the aid of the concept of communicative rationality I decoded the prospect of development from mechanical to organic solidarity. Finally I went back to Max Weber to treat a substantial theme. For I did not just want to show how the theory of communicative behavior can be useful for social theory. I also had a third motif, namely, the *dialectic of social rationalization*. That was already the main theme of the dialectic of enlightenment. I wanted to show that one can develop a theory of modernity using communications-theoretical concepts which possess the analytic selectivity needed for socio-pathological phenomena, for what the Marxist tradition calls reification.

"For this purpose I have developed — perhaps this is a fourth motif — a concept of society that brings together system and action theory. Because Hegelian Marxist social theory, developed in categories of totality, has decomposed into its parts, namely, action theory and systems theory, the present task now consists of combining these two paradigms in a non-trivial fashion — i.e., not merely eclectically and additively. Thus, one can give new form to the critique of instrumental reason which could not be pursued further using the methods of the old critical theory. The new form is the critique of functional reason."

Honneth: "Why a theory of rationalization? There would seem to be other ways to a critical social theory, for example a theory of capitalization, or a theory of specific degrees of division of labor. Why do you hit upon the motif of rationality? Why is rationality the key to a critical social theory?

Habermas: "I could make the answer easy and say that, after all, Adorno and Horkheimer used instrumental reason to reformulate reification. I suggest we first look at the background, in the sense of the psychology of research. The fact that I finally sat down at the end of 1977 to seriously deal with the matter has to do with the following — I'll get back to the theme of rationality later. The tense German political situation, which was becoming more and more like a pogrom following Schleyer's kidnapping in 1977, drove me out of the theoretical ivory tower to take a political stand. For the first time I took seriously neo-conservative ideologies which had become fashionable since about 1973. I did not just shrug my shoulders as if experiencing a sense of *déjà-vu*. Rather, I considered the appearance of these militant late liberals — who followed above all Gehlen and Carl Schmitt in Germany — significant for a broader change. I attempted to clarify the concept of modernity implicit in these considerations, and the departure from modernity, a departure from radical democracy and enlightenment — those ideas which had given rise to the federal republic. That was one side. The other side was that for the first time I felt I better understood the meaning of the new potential for protest and

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new movements with which I had intrinsically no relation. If you take these two phenomena together, you will perhaps understand that this interpretive scheme guided my concluding observations, if not the whole book. Perhaps I should explain that a little better. Both sides, the neo-conservatives and the critics of growth, the one with greater articulation, the other more diffuse, offer conflicting interpretations of the present condition of Western societies, that are with Reagan and the Lady at one end, Mitterrand at the other, and Schmidt in the middle, caught up in the present predicament — three decades after the last disaster. Both interpretations, ideologies, interpretive schema — whatever you want to call them — manipulate dubious subconsequences of an otherwise successful stabilization of internal conditions. This stabilization was attained on the basis of the welfare-state compromise, or by social democracy, in its contemporary sense, as Dahrendorf says."

Honneth: "What do you mean by that?"

Habermas: "It is only a catch-word. The mass democracy of the welfare state and state interventionism form a system that maintains to some degree the capitalist growth dynamic. From this growth it extracts compensations which conform to the system, pacifying traditional class conflicts without disturbing the sanctity of private investment, private structure of wealth, etc. This machine is not running so well at the moment, either *economically* or *socio-psychologically*.

"*Economically:* Some try a refurbished neo-neo-Keynesianism, while others try Friedman and the monetarists, and what results is a fluctuating shift of unsolved problems from the marketplace onto the state, from the state onto the marketplace, and back again. The participants in this zero-sum game somehow have not grasped that the poles 'state' and 'society' are only two sides of the same coin — if viewed from the historical perspective of modernization — namely, systems of action that are at the same time differentiated through the media of steering: exchange value and administrative power. These systems have been consolidated into a monetary-administrative complex, and having been disconnected from the communicatively structured life-world (with private and public spheres), have apparently grown *overcomplex*. The state and the economy will necessarily become more complex with economic growth (this is what the neo-conservatives do not see). Connected to this are conflicts that today take a more socio-psychological form: the defense of life-styles threatened by internal colonization. We must also consider the drastic, only temporarily repressed, military dangers of the instability between superpowers, with the whole joke of armament-mania. The conflicting interpretations that have assumed sharper and sharper contours in the last five or six years react against all of this. What interests me immediately is that both sides turn against the heritage of Western rationalism, as Weber says. The one side does this in the name of a robust post-modernism with curiously regressive characteristics — regardless of whether one evokes the social-romanticism of pioneering capitalism, as the American neo-conservatives do, or mobilizes against the Enlightenment, as in Germany.

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The other side does it mostly by summoning anti-modernist emotions. I only fear that the two competing and conflicting syndromes are racing toward the destruction of all that should be saved in Western tradition and inspiration. The post-modernists would like to hold onto the capitalist blueprint of social rationalization at any price —in fact, rather rabidly. They give economic growth priority over the welfare state. This policy attempts to dampen its negative effects on socially integrated areas of life, upon the family, school, political public sphere, and so on, by returning to a Biedermeier culture, to uprooted but rhetorically reordered traditions. Luhmann's talk of ideology planning was never so true as today. However, the displacement of problems onto the market, which were placed from the market onto the state with good cause since the 19th century, can hardly provide an answer. The problems will survive being shoved back and forth between the media of money and power. And I do not know how to renew the cushions of tradition that supported capitalist societies for centuries — until it was itself consumed — as well as traditionalism from a historically enlightened consciousness. The only source we can still creatively draw on — cultural modernism — is thereby rendered despicable.

"But this gives rise to an unfortunate convergence with the anti-modernist critique of growth. The demanded de-differentiation is clearly no solution unless clear distinctions are made. One must distinguish between the restraint of the monetary-administrative-military complex and the rolling back of structural differentiation of life-forms. Modern life-worlds are differentiated and should remain so in order that the reflexivity of traditions, the individuation of the social subject, and the universalistic foundations of justice and morality do not all go to hell. Hopefully, this is not leading to an ironic division of labor: between apologetic neo-conservatives who want to give their celebrated functionalist reason a traditional twist and young conservatives who combine their awareness of the high risks of contemporary history, their important and courageous defense of threatened life-forms, and their exploration of new ones with increasingly a kind of post-structuralist renunciation of the reason itself.

"To return to the point of departure: My real motive in beginning the book in 1977 was to understand how the critique of reification, the critique of rationalization, could be reformulated in a way that would offer a theoretical explanation of the crumbling of the welfare-state compromise and of the potential for the critique of growth in new movements without surrendering the project of modernity or descending into post- or anti-modernism, 'tough' new conservatism or 'wild' young conservatism."

Honneth: "So, in your opinion, the neo-populist potentials fall prey to a misunderstanding of themselves as long as they follow the critique of modernity offered by post-structuralism or *Lebensphilosophie*?"

Habermas: "I think so. In any case, you must not get the impression that this book is directly political. It is a very theoretical attempt to discover for once how much better the political intentions of these growth-critical movements could be understood were they separated from critiques of modernism in

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general. That is first of all a theoretical problem, and when you read the book you will notice that it has become hopelessly academic.

"Now, I could take up the theoretical problem once more, the question of the normative foundations. Is it not possible — *pace Adorno* — to explicate a concept of communicative reason that can stand against Adorno's negativism so that it contains what Adorno believed could be made visible only indirectly, by way of continual and thorough self-negation? Adorno would certainly not have agreed. All that would have been too affirmative for him. But when one sits in the middle of the academic profession as I do, one must stay away from positions with one foot in post-structuralism; one must seek a theoretical approach that permits connections to productive scientific approaches in order to simultaneously meet the challenge of the older critical theory and do it justice. What this generates may appear to be a return to positions once envisioned by critical theory in the 1930s. Naturally, 'return' must have many quotations marks around it, for I want to make this return without adopting critical theory's background in the philosophy of history. That was a rather long-winded answer to your short question: why critical social theory as a theory of rationality?"

Honneth: "Two more questions on that: what is communicative rationality and how does it allow an interpretation of the structure of contemporary society?"

Habermas: "As I said, I am trying to work out the normative content of the idea of understanding present in language and communication. That leads to a complex concept that not only means we understand the meaning of speech acts, but also that mutual understanding is produced between participants in communication regarding facts, norms, and also experiences. (Each has privileged access to experiences and must express them through expressive self-presentation before an audience if they are to be regarded as one's own.)

"Here we find the three dimensions contained in the concept of communicative rationality: first, the relation of the knowing subject to a world of events or facts; second, the relation to a social world of an acting, practical subject entwined in interaction with others; and finally, the relation of a suffering and passionate subject (in Feuerbach's sense) to its own internal nature, to its own subjectivity and the subjectivity of others. These are three dimensions that come into view when one analyzes communication processes from the participants' perspective. This includes also the life-world, however, which stands behind the back of each participant in communication and out of which the process of understanding is supported. Members of a social collective normally share a life-world. In communication or in processes of cognition this only exists in a uniquely pre-reflexive form of background assumptions, background receptivities or background relations. The life-world is that remarkable thing that dissolves and disappears before our eyes as soon as we try to take it up piece by piece. The life-world functions in relation to processes of communication as a resource for what goes into explicit expression. But the moment this background knowledge enters communicative expression, where it becomes explicit knowledge and thereby subject to criticism, it loses precisely

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those characteristics by virtue of which it belonged to the life-world structures: certainty, background character, impossibility of being gone behind."

Widmann: "In this context, the 'alternative' life must be of interest to you. Here it is precisely the life-world that is to be criticized. From discussions of personal relations to questions of varying tolerances of uncleanliness, an attempt is being made to rationally discuss otherwise unassailable questions."

Knödler-Bunte: "And don't these experiences prove that rational discussion and criticism do not necessarily destroy the life-world, but that new life-worlds can develop?"

Habermas: "Well, I certainly do not mean that attempts to develop essentially the institutionalization of substantive-rational action above all only think that one can label as life-world only those resources that are not thematized, not criticized. The moment one of its elements is taken out and criticized, made accessible to discussion, that element no longer belongs to the life-world. I also think it is impossible to create new forms of living by talking and talking about things. One element of these alternative life-styles does appear to differ clearly from more strongly traditional life-styles. That is the wider horizon of what *can* be thematized. That is also very characteristic of what I have called, perhaps using too strong a term, the 'rationalization of the life-world.' I mean that in a thoroughly positive sense.

"One thing you must not forget in any case: for every element of the most explored, well-worn and well-tried life-world that is changed or even consciously accepted, there are untold masses of elements that even through the most radical of alternative constructs never even crossed the threshold of thematization. The life-world is so unproblematic that we are simply incapable of making ourselves conscious of this or that part of it at will. The fact that certain elements of the life-world become problematic is an objective process. It depends on the problems that press in on us from outside, insofar as something has *become* problematic behind our backs."

Knödler-Bunte: "Do you postulate also, as Agnes Heller does, an ontology of structures in the everyday world that every person has?"

Habermas: "There Agnes Heller is to me somewhat too anthropological. I do believe also, however, that there are general life-world structures. But, first of all, they are present only as infrastructures in historical forms of living that can only exist in the plural — besides which they change in the evolutionary dimension."

Honneth: "Up to now, the subject has been the concept of communicative rationality. What do you mean, however, by the concept of rationalization? If I understand it correctly, this is supposed to bring a dynamic point of view into the analysis?"

Habermas: "First of all, where history of theory is concerned, Max Weber was my point of departure. What he terms processes of social rationalization — essentially the institutionalization of goal-rational action above all in economic and administrative systems — one can understand as the advance of an institutional embodiment of complexes of rationality. Weber himself

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analyzed this on another level, that of culture, predominantly in the sociology of religion. Social rationalization means, then, that a society remolds its basic institutions in order to make use of — so to speak — culturally ready-made structures of rationality. In Weber's view, the capitalist economic system could only arise because there was a class of entrepreneurs to be recruited from the puritanical sects who brought with them the ethical motivational presuppositions for a methodically rational conduct of life; on the other hand, the capitalist means of production could not have been established and stabilized if a legal system had not been institutionalized. This system was tailored to subjects of private law, acting strategically, goal-rationally, each following its own goals. The cognitive structures of a thought governed by principles of the ethic of conviction are embodied in the modern legal system. These structures are embodied by these institutions in the same way that they are 'anchored' in the motives of the strata carrying the spirit of capitalism."

Honneth: "Thus far Weber. But a concept of communicative action would also have to provide another basis for the concept of rationalization."

Habermas: "Schematically described, my critique of Weber is as follows: he does not see the selectivity in the pattern of capitalist rationalization. He does not see that in the development of capitalism those elements are repressed that he himself analyzed under the heading 'ethics of brotherhood.' Here lies nevertheless the practical moral potential also where Weber is concerned. They came into play in the radical religious movements, the Baptists, for example, in the attempt to create institutional forms that were not just simply functional for the emerging capitalist economic system. And precisely this potential did not enter into the dominant institutional pattern of the modern capitalist era. It is just these ethical visions — which approach communicative forms of organization — that are excluded in capitalism.

"On the basis of Mead and Durkheim, I attempt to develop an evolutionary perspective for the reflexive emergence of fluid world-views, for a continuing process of individuation, and for the emergence of a universalistic moral and legal system simultaneous with the liberation of communicative behavior from institutionally frozen contexts. Further, I sharply distinguish between the more or less differentiated or 'rationalized' life-worlds that are reproduced by way of communicative action and, on the other hand, formally organized systems of action based on media steering.

"Today economic as well as administrative imperatives are encroaching upon territory that the life-world can no longer relinquish. To grossly oversimplify the case, until now the processes of destruction that have paved the way to capitalist modernization have occurred in such a way as to give rise to new institutions. These new institutions transferred social material from the realm of sovereignty of the life-world into realms of action steered by the media and organized by formal law. This went well as long as it only touched on functions of material reproduction that need not unconditionally be organized communicatively. In the meantime, however, it seems that the system's imperatives are attacking areas of action which are demonstrably unable to

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perform their own tasks if they are removed from communicatively structured areas of action. This involves tasks such as cultural reproduction, social integration and socialization.

"The battle lines between life-world and system thereby achieve a new relevance. Today economic and administrative imperatives embodied in the media of money and power encroach on areas that somehow collapse as soon as they are broken off from communication-oriented action and transferred to such interactions as are manipulated by these media. These are processes that no longer fit into the scheme of class analysis. But one can demonstrate a functional connection between the central conflicts of the life-world and the requirements of capitalist modernization. I have shown this with examples from social, educational and family policy and also to a degree from the new protest movements."

Honneth: "We have now already entered a new complex of issues. How are the terms of a theory of communicative action used to describe the constitution of contemporary society? Perhaps we should first pose questions of clarification. I would like to have the following question answered: whether it is not more useful to begin with collective agents, with social groups and their organizations, rather than with systems and the logic of institutions?"

Habermas: "In method my suggestion has the advantage that one can inherit something from both structuralism and systems theory. One might consider that these two research traditions have good reason for leaving the realm of action theory. If one wants to analyze steering crises in the economy, for example, one must bring systems-theoretical methods to bear. There is no choice, since the objective dialectics and the concepts of totality in Hegelian theory no longer inspire confidence. What was once bound together is now split asunder: systems theory and action theory."

Widmann: "Fine, what you have said is: here is a sophisticated arsenal of tools, of conceptual means that can be applied. But what realms are revealed by your approach? What cognitive gains do you hope to make?"

Habermas: "One cognitive gain is that the normative contents of a humane social life can be introduced in an unsuspicious way by a communication theory without having to secretly smuggle them in by way of a philosophy of history. With a theory of communication, there is no obligation to proceed only according to action theory, to speak only of agents and their fate, acts and consequences. It becomes possible also to speak of the characteristics of life-worlds in which agents and collectives or individual subjects move. For instance, it is possible to trace at a time of early industrialization the uprooting of a plebeian lower class from a traditional world. What are the ideas with which those who have resisted capitalist modernization for centuries have identified?

"Well into the 19th century it was not so much with the ideals of bourgeois emancipatory movements and certainly not with the ideas of socialism. Instead, such movements drew strength mainly from the potential of traditional ideas, from religious ideas, from religiously founded natural law, etc. I don't mean just the Peasant Wars, but rather this extends far into the

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artisans' movement of the 19th century. These movements are driven by direct provocations of feelings of injustice as well as the need for spontaneity and expression. But such impulses do not become historically meaningful reality if they cannot be expressed publicly. There must be leaflets, there must be someone who will speak out, with whom one can identify. Now, for example, the limits that a traditional life-world places on political movements that objectively reach outside these life-worlds cannot be summed up hermeneutically in the intentions and motives of single agents. It is not enough to ask what the agents were thinking of, what their motives were, what they talked about, although these questions have again become perhaps justifiably modish in the name of a historiography of everyday living. This is very useful taken in itself but, as Adorno would have said, it is somewhat lacking in concepts. Therefore, a structural analysis of life-worlds, based on communication theory, can be useful if one does not wish simply to load the issue from outside with economic interests, political power struggles, etc. Otherwise, one is swimming in a sea of historical contingencies. Just as a sort of grammar emerges in art in the organization and unfolding of a style, so also differentiations of the life-world can be described from within without recourse to the level of action. What does it mean, for example, when a stable system of institutions, containing preformed patterns of action locked within itself, differentiates and separates itself first from interpretive world-views, which also can now take over functions of legitimation — i.e., deception — and, second, generates networks of interaction which are given over to the self-definition of the individual agents?"

Honneth: "It is evident to me that this 'structuralist' element of social analysis does guard against confused conceptions of social processes. My only reservations are that such analyses may no longer translate back into the field of relations between collectives and agents. Once one has divided up the different dimensions of modern rationality in this way, one must ask what strains of rationality are pursued by certain collective agents. For instance, one must ask how stored knowledge is monopolized by power elites and how social strata themselves are thereby constituted. Doesn't social reality therefore divide into social confrontations in regard to monopolies of rationality?"

Habermas: "There you are sketching a program that I have no reservations about, although we would have to agree that it still requires an extremely long period of development."

Knödler-Bunte: "But must everything really fit together in one theory, as you would have it? Why can't one accept that there are differing types of theories, each with its strengths and weaknesses? Their powers of expression compete with each other, and at times they leave room for whatever has as yet found no clear methodical approach? After all, is it possible to imagine *one* social theory, founded on evolutionary theory, that can incorporate connections with universal history as well as concrete analysis of objects and situations?"

Habermas: "One can be satisfied with a respectable historiography that is candid about its own hermeneutic relativity. But is that enough? One would

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also like to have a situational analysis, which, if we are lucky, allows us to understand more than a generalizing historiography can. This makes it clear to us why here in Germany we have such a deformed political culture. It reveals to us the lines of tradition: the empire, Wilhelmianism, the Nazis, the only half-completed bourgeois revolution, etc. On the other hand, we have theories of language, morality and cognition. All this would just remain suspended without helping us put the brightest spotlight possible on our present period, unless social theory could develop the focusing power of a kind of magnifying glass."

Knödler-Bunte: "But this spotlight could also come from such a view as Benjamin's, which combines disparate contexts in order to make specific, shocking revelations about ourselves."

Habermas: "If one uses such an approach from the start, one has relinquished a scientific attitude and has gone over to an aesthetic view of history. Let me explain again my own procedure. Naturally, I am somewhat self-conscious about the approach of evolutionary theory. One is plagued on the one hand by the Second International and by Luhmann on the other, and perhaps even by the ghosts of a naturalistic philosophy of history. This must be avoided. But I also see what can be gained from a theory that tries to work out a logic of development. Such an evolutionary perspective is dangerous if one wants, thus heavily armed, to produce a respectable work of social or cultural history, unless one tempers it to the degree I believe is necessary. As far as evolutionistic assumptions are concerned, I restrict myself to certain modes of interpretation for the infrastructure of possible life-worlds, according to general, genetic-structuralist categories.

"I have yet to carry out an historical analysis according to these procedures of evolutionary theory, but I can imagine that they could reveal few new dimensions of a field as well researched as the Peasant Wars. One has to give it a try. It is somewhat simpler where the present is at issue. In that context we just let ourselves be guided by everyday intuitions. We are all armchair sociologists who put Hegel's "realist morning prayer" into practice, i.e., the reading of the newspaper.

Crisis Theories and Social Movements

Widmann: "Almost nothing is discussed in the ecology movement on a theoretical level as much as the relation between classical Marxist crisis theory of the new crises of complexities evident, for example, in the mechanisms assuring the autonomy of the technical and military apparatus."

Habermas: "I find it more elegant and plausible to give capitalism credit for being what it is — for what it has actually achieved thanks to its level of differentiation and its ability to set a course for itself. Let's give our Marxist hearts a shock: capitalism was quite a success, at least in the area of material reproduction, and it still is. Granted, it has indulged from the beginning in an enormous plunder of traditional forms of life. But today the imperatives built into the dynamics of capitalist growth can only be fulfilled through a substantial growth in the — let us say — monetary-bureaucratic complex.

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Therefore, we now observe and feel and suffer an 'overspill,' an encroachment by the system on areas no longer at all related to material reproduction. These areas of cultural tradition — social integration through values and norms, education, socialization of coming generations — are, however, ontologically speaking, held together by their very nature through the medium of communicative behavior. Once the steering media such as money and power penetrate these areas, for instance by redefining relations in terms of consumption, or by bureaucratizing the conditions of life, then it is more than an attack on traditions. The foundations of a life-world that is already rationalized are under assault. What is at stake is the symbolic reproduction of the life-world itself. In sum, crises that arise in the area of material reproduction are intercepted at the cost of a pathologizing of the life-world. I developed this thesis in my book, and I believe that in this way some problems can be solved."

Honneth: "I prefer questions that again touch on the conceptual distinction between subsystems, but I would like to begin with empirically oriented questions. Isn't the last of what you have said a view that is too much centered around West Germany? Beyond our western borders there are conflicts of a much more profoundly threatening nature, and which can hardly be explained by recourse to a crisis theory of system and life-world. I am thinking of the quite traditional conflicts that today arise mainly from structural unemployment resulting from capitalist accumulation, and from a wave of rationalization whose consequences we can only speculate on."

Habermas: "Where will these conflicts be precipitated as long as the safety net of the welfare state holds up?"

Widmann: "When the president of the Swedish Association of Savings Banks predicts that the Western industrial nations will lose one quarter of both their blue-collar and white-collar jobs in the next 15 years, I don't see any safety net of social services that can deal with that. I don't believe crises are automatic, but I see the approach of huge problems that have nothing to do with a conflict between system and life-world."

Habermas: "The analysis I have worked out presents this alternative: on the one hand, the conditions necessary to the welfare state compromise may be fulfilled — continuous, albeit restrained, economic growth. Then problems would arise that I would place under the heading of colonization of the life-world, an erosion or undermining of realms of communicatively structured action. On the other hand, the dynamics of growth may not be maintained; then we would see some variant of traditional conflicts."

Widmann: "Can conditions be determined that would once again set off traditional class conflict? Isn't what you have just outlined therefore a theory of the exceptional case?"

Habermas: "Well, first of all, I don't believe in the 'law' of the falling rate of profits..."

Widmann: "That was the exceptional case."

Habermas: "But it would be absurd to attempt to exclude the possibility of economic crises. At this very moment we are getting lots of material to

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illustrate my friend O'Connor's thesis concerning the fiscal crisis."

Knödler-Bunte: "Put quite simply, our problem was this: Precisely because we face new zones of conflict, isn't it necessary to reconstruct the old theory of class in light of new experiences, without weakening the concepts of class and class struggle beyond recognition? Don't we need new theoretical approaches that can point out to us the interrelation between traditional zones of conflict and new potential for resistance? The crisis theory assumptions of system and life-world remain irrelevant if at the same time new interpretations aren't given to the older problems of class-specific oppression and inequality of cultural opportunity. But I don't see such a sharp break between the traditional lines of conflict of the working class movement and the social movements of today."

Habermas: "It could be that radicalization came about through a flood of cultural conflicts. You said it yourself: the world of the Social Democrats of 1890 or 1910 can't be compared to today. That was still a political party able to assure an identity. It also had no stabilizing function comparable to social democracy today. The old Social Democratic Party was truly an 'enemy of the *Reich*.' "

Honneth: "But since there is no such thing anymore as the working class movement in its traditional form, we have to confront problems that didn't even exist in, say, the time of the Weimar Republic. I just think that the potential for conflict and protest that you speak of in terms of 'neo-populist movements' has to be seen in a different light. One could say that these potentials for protest, which have received by now sufficient publicity in the press, are the tip of an iceberg rising out of a broad spectrum of persisting class-specific problems and conflicts. These, however, do not find an appropriate voice because a working-class movement that previously provided cultural means of expression no longer exists."

Habermas: "That would be a decisive point only if the groups that today present the resonance and articulation of the now questionable class-specific base would react to some kind of class-specific problems."

Honneth: "The first thesis would be that there are states of conflict and potential for protest that are or have been forced to remain voiceless, for historical reasons and for reasons traceable to cultural reproduction. The problems that accumulate here and which are related to class-specific conditions of life..."

Habermas: "But why then should the class-specific problems of voiceless workers find their voice precisely in the complaints of the sons and daughters of the bourgeois strata?"

Honneth: "No, no, that is a misunderstanding of my thesis. I simply suspect that next to these explicit protest formations, which naturally have also been promoted by the press, there exists another, more traditional set of conflicts, which does not have this kind of cultural means of expression. Your thesis of cultural impoverishment could therefore be taken seriously in another way. I admit that in order to name such conflict one certainly cannot rely on what you referred to as empirical data. One therefore can't rely on

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questionnaires, that certain economic..."

Habermas: "I wonder if this isn't an ahistorical view. Isn't it true that you discover these deficiencies because you subscribe to an entirely different potential for protest? Isn't it so, that with your completely different background or socialization you see a conspiracy behind quite evident imperatives — consumption, administration, bureaucracy — that burst in from highly differentiated life-worlds outside? Aren't you ascribing your viewpoint to someone who has no such viewpoint?"

Honneth: "Yes, it is always difficult to answer the objection that one is projecting one's own sensibilities onto social groups and strata that may not be affected by them. I believe one can avoid this by hypothetically proving the type of conflict or experience of deprivation that plays a role here. And one must be able to show that this has nothing to do with one's own sensibilities and experiences. The core of what I would expect here would be a repressed and culturally silenced potential for protest in dimensions of social respect and social recognition. Those may be antiquated concepts, but they are still able to record a persistent experience that we really do have of the deprivation of social respect. I don't believe that is a projection. There would be historical indices of that, which a new historiography of the working class movement would have to investigate. Precisely such motivs as 'struggle for social recognition' are perhaps a central and also always latent impulse."

Knödler-Bunte: "I would also say that it is in parts of the middle class that the psychological framework for sensitizing, for experiencing cultural disenfranchisement has its breaking point, so to speak. But that still says nothing about the genesis and the validity of these conflicts. Rather, it opposes the thesis of a suspended class struggle, in which the working class is considered culturally integrated. Is it actually true that the entire proletariat has been bound to the system by internalizing the norms of abstract labor? Or is it not the case that in truth large portions of the proletariat, the majority of the working population, have simply not participated to a great extent in this system — bourgeois culture as a structuring of the subject? Perhaps they have not subscribed, after all, to the normative concepts of bourgeois ideology along with its self-understanding and its world view, but have kept it at arm's length, always conscious that in very basic issues the system operates independent of their own wishes and needs. That is the question as I see it, whether the 'alternative movement' does not to a degree continue this experience in a non-class-specific way. Within the dominant system it, too, finds no cultural recognition, no way of asserting a satisfying organization of its own life."

Habermas: "All right, you know the scene better than I do. Earlier, at least, it was simpler to see the student movement as a catalyst providing energy for the real class struggle. Perhaps one should now realize that the 'alternative scene' arises from the sensibilities of those who are able to experience things as deprivations, which a Social Democrat worker or a white-collar worker of the middle generation would not experience in that way."

Knödler-Bunte: "There I would still disagree with you, for several reasons.

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First, as I see it, the predominant type of person in the 'alternative scene' is by now no longer someone from an educated bourgeois family and often has not completed any program of higher education. For such a person, to drop out is less symbolic as an experiment with new living patterns than it is as an alternative to life in a factory or office, with clear and concrete advantages and disadvantages. The aesthetic stylizations come from outside, from the culture apparatus (also on the Left), which projects onto the 'alternative scene' its own wishes and fears. Within the workings of 'alternative' projects there are few illusions about what one is doing, and many concrete experiences of the difficulty of organizing life and work. That brings me to a second point. Recently, I have taken part in many discussions between young unionized workers and members of 'alternative' projects. It was remarkable how quickly and directly the two groups understood each other. And that is actually not surprising, since both have to deal with similar problems of the work situation — division of labor, hierarchies in the workplace, and the right to work. Only the possible solutions are different. The need to live and work differently, therefore, seems to extend far into the core of the industrial workers' community. 'Alternative' projects would be attractive to many young workers if concrete dialogue would take place and if 'alternative' projects could make certain guarantees regarding income, continuity and social services. Finally, a third point. Your criticism is aimed too high, because you assess our argument by very traditional standards. You apply a concept of class struggle and class analysis that in recent debates, especially of social history, have long since been opened up and expanded. Perhaps the theory of class we have ascribed to Marx has itself become historical, applicable at best to a short phase of industrial capitalism in the second half of the 19th century. Fine, you say, that is a cultural reinterpretation of the theory of class. But I think that one must analyze social conflicts in a widened spectrum of cultural theory, without letting the concept of class lose its power of expression."

Honneth: "I would ask if it is possible to define the dimensions of social class relations on the basis of the concept of the social life-world, which is what you are actually doing. I am thinking here not only of the dimension of class-specific living situations and certain, let us say, biographically central problem constellations. These can be empirically observed in specific opportunities for social mobility, opportunities for identity, risks to life and damage to health. But I am also thinking of the dimensions of cultural reproduction — a concept that is also central to your model — that is, a hierarchical system of strata with cultural opportunities for expression and rights to social definition. Can what Gramsci describes with the concept of cultural hegemony — the elevation of one social class's form of expression by means of a culturally prescribed network of dominating forms of expression — be simply separated from the idea of cultural reproduction? To put it simply, what can be learned for the concept of the social life-world from this cultural turn in Marxism? Can one simply exclude it?"

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Habermas: "No, of course not. But Lukacs had already used reification as a general term for deformations of consciousness. In critical theory's critique of mass culture this is even more pronounced."
Widmann: "I tend more to the opinion that your model is to a certain extent a general theory, of which the theory of class struggle describes a particular sharpening at a certain point in time. The theory of class struggle would then be a special case of the antithesis of system and life-world, which permeates all of history."
Habermas: "You mean that the classical conflicts between peasants, proletariat and bourgeoisie also reflect a defensive reaction against the capitalist penetration of the life-world, against the destruction which was caused by capitalist modernization. That I believe without hesitation. Within this picture I am only missing the transformation of the life-world itself. Marx could not sufficiently distinguish between traditional life-worlds, which are worn away through modernization processes, and a structural differentiation of the life-forms which are today threatened in their communicative infrastructure. As a result of capitalist modernization destruction occurs, which entails the downfall of traditional forms of life. Where modern societies arise this breakdown is indeed always unavoidable. This does not mean that one should be permitted to intentionally support it and morally put up with it."
Knödler-Bunte: "I agree with that. The question is only: Can the destruction of life-worlds by the imperatives of a capitalist system in each case only be constructed on the basis of concrete historical material, or is there something like a logical progression of steps for the differentiation of life-worlds? There I am very skeptical."
Habermas: "Now, there are certainly communicative structures, which all life-worlds have in common. These are very formal elements like the relation of personality structures to social institutions and to contexts of tradition. The dimension of developmental logic concerns only how these elements differentiate themselves and how the differentiation passes through the individuation processes, through the abstraction and generalization of norms and through the increasing reflexivity of cultural traditions. That is what Durkheim or Mead described. That does not mean that these processes are irreversible, but just that they simply take place when any form of modernization begins."
Honneth: "I do not believe that one can introduce the above mentioned categories in a class-neutral fashion. One cannot argue on the basis of an internal evolutionism that asserts a linear destruction of the life-world. Is it not more the case that when one looks at the family, for example, that the proletarian family is a product of the historical conflicts surrounding the shortening of the working day?

"These communicative life relationships therefore do not need to be seen as remnants of a precapitalist life-world, which was untouched by the constraints of capitalist rationalization, but rather, as a product of social conflicts and not as a remainder of a precapitalist form of production which will gradually be corroded by capitalism."

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Habermas: "That is also the case."
Knödler-Bunte: "I also believe that destruction and deformation are interlaced with new growth and new formations."
Widmann: "It makes a difference, however, whether one understands the current protests as a form of reaction of a closed life-world to administrative and monetary intervention or whether one conceives of the life-world itself as functional for the administrative system, so that in the course of development both spheres must determine anew their relation to one another and thereby also their inner structure. From this perspective an intact life-world does not simply stand opposed to the capitalist system. Instead, today's conflicts are a medium through which a new balance must be found between these spheres and within themselves. Thus, they fulfill the same function as the classical crisis of capitalism. It did not signal the collapse of the system, but rather the mechanism by which the system maintained itself through change. That is a different view, a different perspective, than yours. According to you the communicative life-world is a block against which capitalist rationalization scratches."
Habermas: "Yes, I really do believe that it is a question of injecting communicative everyday praxis into institutions. This was once a conservative view."

Science and Life-Praxis
Knödler-Bunte: "I admit that I have the most difficulties with the structure of your theory and with the attitude that I surmise is behind it, and considerably fewer problems with your political program and your political and theoretical self-understanding. What libidinous images does a theory have, which is so abstract and which stands under an unbelievable compulsion to synthesize? Where in the intellectual work linked to it are the moments of happiness, of satisfaction, without which one can hardly understand such effort? In your self-explication the word *anschlussfähig* [capacity for establishing connection] appears again and again: one's own intellectual work must connect with the standards and expectations that the scientific system represents. But how do you justify the centrality of this scientific system that is practically your only reference point? The other and historically alternative reference point, namely the proletarian organization, has since disposed of itself, but are there really only these two possibilities? The scientific system and the organized labor movement have one thing in common, that they have made themselves institutionally autonomous and that the former has been isolated from exactly those experiences that would be necesary as intellectual stimulation. As a result, the best that the tenured academic and the political functionary can still offer is a kind of craftsman's work ethic. That is, if it has not already been buried under industriousness and officiousness, and under short-term recognition which maintains the system and keeps the problem current. Radical attitudes and scientific innovations require change in life-praxis, a restructuring of priorities according to which one structure's one's life. Can a social theory such as you promote also prove that this confidence in the ability of the

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scientific system to function is objectively justifiable?"

Habermas: "Those are now two questions. The first has to do with the incentives and motives behind my work and the second aims at a certain, shall we say, faith in science. Concerning the first question I have a conceptual motive and a fundamental intuition. This, by the way, refers back to religious traditions such as those of the Protestant or Jewish mystics, also of Schelling. The motive-forming thought is the reconciliation of the decayed parts of modernity, the idea that without surrendering the differentiation that modernity has made possible in the social and economic spheres, one can find forms for living together in which real autonomy and dependency can appear in a satisfying relation, that one can move erect in a collectivity that does not have the dubious quality of backward-oriented forms of community.

"The intuition springs from the sphere of connection with others; it aims at experiences of undisturbed intersubjectivity. These are more fragile than anything that the history of communication structures has until now set into motion — a web of intersubjective relations that nevertheless make possible a relation between freedom and dependency that one can always only imagine with interactive models. Wherever these ideas appear, whether in Adorno, when he quotes Eichendorff, in Schelling's *Weltalter*, in the young Hegel, or in Jakob Böhme, these are always ideas of successful interaction, of reciprocity and distance, of separation and manageable yet not failed nearness, of vulnerability and complementary caution. All of these images of protection, openness and compassion, of submission and resistance rise out of a 'horizon of experience,' to use Brecht's words, of 'friendly life together.' This friendliness does not exclude conflicts, rather it focuses on those human forms by way of which one can survive them.

"Now for the question about the confidence in the scientific system. I am myself not yet certain whether what I truly intend and what intuitively directs my work can be housed in its essential elements within the scientific system. When one grows up as we have, one tries in life somehow to bring in and clarify one's basic intuition. For me, this occurs through the medium of scientific thought or philosophy. When one devotes oneself to questions of truth and does not misunderstand himself in the process, then he should not, as Heidegger and Adorno have done, try to produce truths outside of the sciences or to set up a higher level of insight, on a memory of being or on a mindfulness of tormented nature. It is my deepest belief that one must not do that when engaging in thinking."

Widmann: "Why not?"

Habermas: "If one wants to live and write out of the latest conclusions, then one should not try to realize what one would wish in a tenured professorship or at a research institute. That reminds me of experiences I have had at the rostrum or in the seminar room. When I realize that students are totally uninvolved emotionally with what I am doing, what we are doing together, than I am dissatisfied because I know that all learning depends on the formation of inner motives. On the other hand, when I realize that students can no longer come down from their emotions, that a symbiotic relationship is

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being developed, then I become enormously nervous. I want to save a sense of the insolatibility of questions of truth, I want to keep the sense for discourse alive in a situation which *objectively* forces one not to mix questions of truth with questions of justice or taste. This is expressed in an obstinate Kantian manner; but I have accustomed myself to this neo-Kantian jargon in the last ten years, and I am somehow relieved that I can say it so casually. I have never dared to say it in this manner — 'this bureaucratic departmentalization of aspects of reason,' Adorno would have said. This is exactly the signature and the thorn of modernity. How one gets by that point is perhaps the problem.

"In what I intend — one never really knows what one does — I meet Max Weber half way by trying to keep various spheres separate: these political-journalistic things, then 'real' philosophizing (which paradoxically I can only continue with interruptions, although it is here that my intentions are most constantly realized). Further, in a narrower sense, scientific work, finally teaching and, when the time is ripe, political praxis, which goes beyond journalism. In the last ten years I have also had to play the role of institutional director. I keep these various kinds of work separate, but I am not saying that this is a kind of division of labor, in which one has nothing to do with the other or in which it is a matter of a combination of various roles. I would much rather play each of these roles, such that the other ones stay simultaneously visible. What annoys me terribly, what touches me, is the aggressivity of people who do not see the role differentiation in me, let alone respect it, and mix everything together. I have experienced that again in the last few weeks. I am not speaking about the routine belligerent articles in the degenerate products that are published by the editorial board of the Bavarian cultural minister in the *Rheinischen Merkur*; I mean the sheer opportunism of the so-called liberal milieu.

"I would like to maintain a certain differentiation, as a matter of fact, if it is not too lofty, for moral reasons or perhaps also out of fear. In today's society there are certain standards that separate the responsible from the irresponsible minds. As a professor or scholar with the authority of those positions to examine questions of truth, one should not say things that touch people without at least trying to come to terms with structures such as institutionalized research."

Widmann: "Don't the reasons for this lie much more in yourself? Namely, that you would not like to be caught holding on to something against all reason?"

Habermas: "In my convictions there is also a dogmatic center. I would rather abandon scholarship than allow this center to soften, for those are intuitions which I did not gain through science, that no person ever gains that way, but rather through the environment of people with whom one matures, with whom one discusses and in whom one recognizes oneself."

Widmann: "Why do you take the geographic location of the university for that place where sensible argumentation and sensible analytic procedures are guaranteed?"

Habermas: "I only think like this when I am annoyed at the people who

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always talk about 'bourgeois academia' as if they had monopolized a blanket judgment. Theories can in any case no longer be sorted out according to such criteria. But that is only a genetic explanation. With that one has not yet said why exactly the choice of the university.... But is there then another location?"

Widmann: "You always link up with predominant theories or good outsiders..."

Habermas: "Perhaps you want to say by that: Are you not a coward who always makes himself secure through the authorities and through what is currently in vogue? It is certainly true that in the 1960s and 1970s, and this annoys the empiricist baggage, I played a large role in bringing certain theoretical methodologies into discussion, which others still had to work through — such as Wittgenstein, Piaget, Chomsky, Kohlberg, Searle, etc. The difference is only that I still hold on to what I learned from all of them, even when academic fashion moved on. When I have learned something from someone I remain to a certain extent faithful to him about this aspect. I do not follow the fashions of the academic industry. I do not know whether this answers your question."

Widmann: "Do you have the feeling that you need these constructs, this speaking in different tongues, this terrific willingness to be receptive, in order to articulate yourself?"

Habermas: "I believe that I make the foreign tongues my own in a rather brutal manner, hermeneutically speaking. Even when I quote a good deal and take over other terminologies I am clearly aware that my use of them often has little to do with the authors' original meaning. What is then the peculiar pleasure to be had in this process? Even if I sweat a lot over my work and use a lot of my life history for it, I enjoy it when I have the impression, 'Ah, you have seen something. There you can further develop something with arguments.' Then I am satisfied because I think that is the only way. Those are certainly small joys. The thinker as life-style, as vision, as expressive self-portrait is no longer possible. I am not a producer of a *Weltanschauung;* I would really like to produce a few small truths, not one big one.

"When I have found an interesting flower or herb I try to figure out how it will fit together with other ones, whether it can create a bouquet or pattern. This is constructive puzzle work. I take over other theories. Why not? One should accept others according to their strengths and then see how one can go from there. One should support the other, for theoretical truths actually exist only in the form of plausibilities.

"I have for myself, in any case, said good bye to an emphatic philosophical expectation of truth. This elitist concept of truth is a last remaining piece of myth, and you know that I do not want to return to where the *Zeitgeist* is leading today."

Knödler-Bunte: "Where do the experiences of happiness or a satisfying situation lie for you in your intellectual praxis?"

Habermas: "There are more analytic minds and more synthetic minds, and I certainly belong on the synthetic side. As a result, my satisfactions lie more in

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a synthesis of argumentation. Earlier, it used to satisfy me to fabricate texts. This aspect of the 'pretty tongue,' as Grass once said about Adorno, has retreated more and more. In the meantime I deal with rougher discourse in order to develop something even when a text is not the result. You can see it in my new book. Of course, there is still the ambition that there be a text with introduction, exposition, incidental observations, etc., but the construction of problem orientations is more important now.

"Naturally I physically experience the problems that occupy me at the moment; so I am happy, when something seems to be working out for me. I am very seldom euphoric.... I must have paper before me, blank paper, written-on paper, books around me, but I am not a worker with a filing cabinet. One needs to invest oneself in the work, and then the problems begin to move with writing. This way, having problems is a matter of personal history. It disturbs life, and then one is happy, when one has found a solution and can write further."

Knödler-Bunte: "What is the next mountain you need to climb?"

Habermas: "Hills, only little hills. I might go to Frankfurt University, and I do not know how much time my responsibilities there will leave me. I am planning a series of lectures about theories of modernity. That will certainly be fun. With colleagues from other disciplines I would gladly practice what I always demand, the cooperation of philosophy with the separate disciplines. Based on empirical material it must be shown that one can bring reason into academia. The other goal would be to write something once again like *Strukturwandel der Oeffentlichkeit* from my current perspective. So much fog lies around today everywhere. I am not giving up the hope that this fog can be lifted. It would be nice if I could do my part to help."

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NEW SOCIAL MOVEMENTS*

by Jürgen Habermas

In the last ten to twenty years, conflicts have developed in advanced Western societies that, in many respects, deviate from the welfare-state pattern of institutionalized conflict over distribution. These new conflicts no longer arise in areas of material reproduction; they are no longer channeled through parties and organizations; and they can no longer be alleviated by compensations that conform to the system. Rather, the new conflicts arise in areas of cultural reproduction, social integration, and socialization. They are manifested in sub-institutional, extra-parliamentary forms of protest. The underlying deficits reflect a reification of communicative spheres of action; the media of money and power are not sufficient to circumvent this reification. The question is not one of compensations that the welfare state can provide. Rather, the question is how to defend or reinstate endangered life styles, or how to put reformed life styles into practice. In short, the new conflicts are not sparked by *problems of distribution,* but concern the *grammar of forms of life.*

This new type of conflict is an expression of the "silent revolution" in values and attitudes that R. Inglehart has ascertained for entire populations.[1] Studies by Hildebrandt, Dalton, Barnes and Kaase?[2] verify the thematic change from "old politics," which revolve around questions of economic, social, domestic and military security, to "new politics." This entails problems of quality of life, equality, individual self-realization, participation, and human rights. According to social statistics, the "old politics" are supported by entrepreneurs, workers, and the professional middle class. New politics, on the other hand, find more support in the new middle class, the younger generation, and those groups with higher levels of formal education. These phenomena correspond to the hypothesis of internal colonization.

If we can assume that growth in the economic-administrative complex spurs erosive processes in the life-world, then we can expect old conflicts to be overlapped by new ones. A line of conflict arises between, on the one hand, the center composed of strata *directly* involved in the production process and interested in maintaining capital growth as the basis for the compromise of the welfare state and, on the other hand, a colorful mixture of groups

*The following is taken from "Tasks for a Critical Theory of Society," the last chapter of my new book. This chapter addresses the question as to how the issues raised by critical theory in the 1930s can be made relevant again today under different circumstances. This explains the objectified, descriptive nature of my remarks. They are not intended to substitute for a political analysis. Had I wanted to provide the latter, of course, I would have had to write from the vantage point of an active participant.

1. R. Inglehart, "Wertwandel und politisches Verhalten," *Sozialer Wandel in Westeuropa,* ed. J. Matthes (New York, 1979).

2. K. Hildebrandt, R.J. Dalton, "Die neue Politik," *PVS* 18 (1977); S.H. Barnes, M. Kaase, *et al., Political Action* (Beverly Hills and London, 1979).

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on the periphery. Among the latter are those groups that are farther removed from the "productivist core" of performance"[3] in late capitalist societies, those who are more sensitive to the self-destructive consequences of the growth in complexity, or who are more seriously affected by them.[4] The bond that unifies these heterogeneous groups is the critique of growth. Neither the bourgeois liberation movements nor the organized workers' movements provide a model for this type of protest. Historical parallels are more often found in the social-romantic movements of early industrialism, led by craftsmen, plebeians, and workers; in the defensive movements of the populist middle class; in the attempts to escape motivated by bourgeois critiques of civilization undertaken by reformers, *Wandervogel*, and so on.

The rapid changes in scenes, groupings, and topics makes it very difficult to classify the current potential for protest and retreat. To the extent that organizational cores form in parties or associations, the members are recruited from the same diffuse reservoir.[5] The following key phrases are currently used to identify various trends in the Federal Republic of Germany: the anti-nuclear and environmental movement; the peace movement (encompassing the North-South conflict); the citizens' action movement; the alternative movement (which comprises urban scenarios with squatters and alternative projects as well as communites in the country); minorities (the elderly, homosexuals, disabled people, etc.); the psychological scene with support groups and youth sects; religious fundamentalism; the tax protest movement; parent associations' school protest; resistance to "modernist reforms"; and finally, the women's movement. Furthermore, independence movements struggling for regional, linguistic, cultural or religious autonomy are also of international significance.

I would like to differentate the emancipatory potential from the potential for resistance and retreat in this spectrum. After the period of the American civil rights movement, which has long since concluded in the particularistic self-affirmation of black sub-cultures, the only movement that follows the tradition of bourgeois-socialist liberation movements is the feminist movement. The struggle against patriarchal oppression and for the realization of a promise that is deeply rooted in the acknowledged universalist foundations of morality and legality lends feminism the impetus of an offensive movement, whereas all other movements are more defensive in character. The movements of resistance and retreat seek to *stem* or block the formal, organized spheres of action in favor of communicative structures; they do not seek to conquer new territory. To be sure, an element of particularism links feminism to these movements: the emancipation of women means more than the merely *formal* attainment of equality and elimination of male prejudices. It means the toppling of concrete life styles

3. J. Hirsch, "Alternativbewegung — eine politische Alternative," *Parlamentarisches Ritual und politische Alternativen*, ed. R. Roth (Frankfurt am Main, 1980).

4. Of great help to me was the manuscript by K.W. Brand, "Zur Diskussion um Enstehung, Funktion und Perspektive der Oekologie- und Alternativbewegung" (Munich, 1980).

5. Hirsch (1980); J. Huber, *Wer soll das alles ändern?* (Berlin, 1980).

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determined by male monopolies. The historical legacy of the sexual division of labor, to which women were subjected in the nuclear bourgeois family, also gives them access to virtues, to a set of values that are both in contrast and comlementary to the male world and at odds with the one-sided rationalized praxis of everyday life.

Within the resistance movements one can distinguish between the defense of traditional and social property and a defensive which already operates on the basis of a rationalized life-world and tries out new forms of cooperation and community. This criterion allows us to separate the old middle-class protest against the threat which major technical projects posed to neighborhoods, parents' protest against comprehensive schools, the tax protest (for which the California movement for Proposition 13 provides a model), and even most independence movements, from the core of the new conflict potential: i.e., from the *youth and alternative movement*, for which a critique of growth based on *environmental and peace concerns* provides the common focus. I would like to support, at least cursorily, the argument that these conflicts can be understood as resistance to tendencies to colonize the life-world.[6]

The objectives, attitudes, and behavior prevalent in youthful protest groups can at first be grasped as reactions to specific *problem situations* perceived with great sensitivity: *"green" problems*. The large industrial intervention in ecological balances, the scarcity of non-renewable natural resources, and the demographic development present industrially developed societies with serious problems. Yet, these challenges are largely abstract and require technical and economic solutions that must, in turn, be planned globally and implemented by administrative means. What sparks the protest, however, is the tangible destruction of the urban environment, the destruction of the countryside by bad residential planning, industrialization and pollution, health impairments due to side effects of civilization-destruction, pharmaceutical practices, and so forth. These are developments that visibly attack the *organic foundations of the life-world* and make one drastically conscious of criteria of livability, of inflexible limits to the deprivation of sensual-aesthetic background needs.

Problems of Over-Complexity: Certainly, there are good reasons to fear the potential for military destruction, nuclear power plants, atomic waste, gene manipulation, storage and central utilization of private data, etc. These real fears, however, combine with the horror of a new category of literally invisible risks that can be grasped only from the vantage point of the system. These risks intrude into the life-world, but at the same time they explode the dimensions of the life-world. The fears function as catalysts for a feeling of being overwhelmed by possible consequences of processes for which moral responsibility can be assumed, inasmuch as we set them in motion both technically and politically, but for which we can in fact not be responsible

6. J. Raschke, "Politik und Wertwandel in den westlichen Demokratien," supplement to the weekly newspaper *Das Parlament* (September 1980), pp. 23ff.

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because of their uncontrollable magnitude. In this case, resistance is directed toward abstractions that are forced upon the life-world. They must be addressed within the life-world, although they supercede the *sensually* focused, spatial, social, and temporal *boundaries of complexity* even of extremely differentiated life-worlds.

Burdens on the Communal Infra-Structure: An obvious component of the psychology movement and renewed religious fundamentalism and a motivating force behind most of the alternative projects and many citizens action groups is the pain of withdrawal symptoms in a culturally impoverished and unilaterally rationalized praxis of everyday life. Thus, ascribed characteristics such as sex, age, skin color, even neighborhood and religion, contribute to the establishment and delimitation of communities, the creation of sub-culturally protected communications groups which further the search for personal and collective identity. High value is placed on the particular, the provincial, small social spaces, decentralized forms of interaction and de-specialized activities, simple interaction and non-differentiated public spheres. This is all intended to promote the revitalization of buried possibilities for expression and communication. Resistance to reformist intervention also belongs here. Such intervention becomes its opposite because the means of its implementation run counter to the declared, social-integrative objectives.

The new conflicts thus arise at the seam between system and life-world. I have already indicated how the exchange between private and public sphere, on the one hand, and economic and administrative system, on the other, takes place via the media of money and power. I have also outlined how this exchange becomes institutionalized in the roles of the employed and the consumer, the client and the citizen (*Staatsbürger*). Precisely these roles are the target of protest. Alternative praxis is opposed to the profit-oriented instrumentalization of professional labor, the market-dependent mobilization of labor, the extension of competitiveness and performance pressure into elementary school. It is also directed against the process whereby services, relations and time become monetary values, against the consumerist redefinition of private life spheres and personal life styles. Furthermore, the clients' relation to public service agencies is intended to be broken and restructured according to the participatory model of self-help organizations. This direction is particularly characteristic for reform models in the area of social and health policy (for example, in the case of psychiatric care). Finally, those forms of protest that range from the undirected explosion of youthful disturbances (Zurich burns) to calculated or surrealistic violations of the rules (such as the American civil rights movement and student protests) to violent provocations and intimidation negate the definitions of the citizens' role as well as the routines of a goal-oriented realization of interests.

The partial dissolution of the social roles of employees and consumers, of clients and citizens, should, according to the *programmatic conceptions* of some theoreticians, clear the path for *counter-institutions* developed from

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within the life-world in order to limit the particular dynamic of the economic and political-administrative system of action. On the one hand, these institutions are supposed to branch off from the economic system into a second, informal sector that no longer is profit-oriented. On the other hand, these institutions are supposed to counter the party system with new forms of an expressive "politics of the first person" which, at the same time, is supposed to have a democratic base.[7] According to this conception, such institutions would render inactive the abstraction and neutralization process by virtue of which work and political opinion have been linked to media-directed interactions in modern societies. The capitalist firm and the mass party (as an "ideologically neutral organization to attain power") organize their social realms of influence through labor markets and constructed public spheres. They treat their employees and their electors as an abstract labor force or as subjects of decision, and they differentiate and distance those spheres in which alone personal and collective identities could be formed as the *environment* of the system. The counter-institutions, on the other hand, are supposed to re-integrate a section of the formally organized areas of action, save it from the influence of media intervention, and restore these "liberated areas" to the mechanism of understanding which coordinates action.

Regardless of how unrealistic these notions may be, they remain important for the polemical significance of the new resistance and retreat movements which are reacting to the colonization of the life-world. This significance is hidden in the self-image of the participants just as it is in the ideological depiction of the enemy when the rationality of the maintenance of the status quo in economic and administrative systems of action are identified with each other; that is, whenever rationalization of the life-world is not carefully distinguished from the increasing complexity of the social system. This confusion explains the mutually disruptive fronts that obscure political oppositions which are set up between the anti-modernism of the young conservatives and the new-conservative defense of a post-modernism that robs a modernism alienated from itself of its reasonable content and its possibilities for the future.

7. On the dual economy, cf. A. Gorz, *Abschied vom Proletariat* (Frankfurt am Main, 1980); Huber (1980). On the impact of democratic mass parties on the electors' life-world context, see Claus Koffe, "Konkurrenzpartei und kollektive politische Identität," in *Parlamentarisches Ritual* (1980).

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MODERNITY AND THE APORIAS OF CRITICAL THEORY

by Seyla Benhabib

I

Since Weber's analysis of modernity through the category of rationalization, diagnosing the irrationality of this rationalization had been a central preoccupation of critical theory. Marcuse ended his "Industrialization and Capitalism in the Work of Max Weber" with the question: "Is there perhaps already in Max Weber's concept of reason that irony that understands but disavows? Does he by any chance mean to say: And this you call 'reason'?"[1] Marcuse's question was not unjustified, for it pointed to an unresolved ambivalence in Weber's own work on modernity. In diagnosing that societal rationalization processes would inevitably result in a loss of freedom (*Freiheitsverlust*), whereas Western cultural rationalism would lead to an irreversible loss of meaning (*Sinnverlust*), Weber provided a highly ambivalent evaluation of the significance of modernity in the West.

According to Weber, the modern soul, confronted with a world reduced to an infinite chain of events, had to recognize that the meaning of the world could no longer be learned from the results of its analysis, "be it ever so perfect."[2] Rather, the differentiation of culture into different value spheres, as well as the irreconcilable conflicts between science and morality, science and religion, and between all three and aesthetics, placed the burden of creating meaning on the shoulders of the modern individual.[3] Loss of meaning meant world-alienation. With the growing rationalization of social life, however, the modern individual had become increasingly unable to bestow autonomous meaning. World-alienation would be transformed into worldly conformism. In all spheres of collective life, social rationalization reproduced the same organizational model of a rationalized hierarchical apparatus of experts, limited in their competencies and trained to obey. Locked into this "iron cage,"[4] freedom would become routinized and cease to be autonomy. Loss of freedom meant self-alienation.

To those who could not bear "the fates of the times like a man," Weber's advice was: "May he return silently, without the usual publicity build-up of renegades, but simply and plainly. The arms of the Old Church are opened widely and compassionately for him."[5] For those who could bear "the fates of the times," nothing remained but the acceptance of an ethics of responsibility informed by a pessimistic diagnosis of the times and a commitment to the moral dignity of the individual who did not seek such false retreats from modernity.

1. In Herbert Marcuse, *Negations: Essays in Critical Theory* (Boston, 1969), p. 226.
2. Max Weber, "Objectivity in Social Science and Social Policy," *The Methodology of the Social Sciences*, trans. and ed. by E.A. Shills and H.A. Finch (New York, 1949), p. 57.
3. Max Weber, *Gesammelte Aufsätze zur Religionssoziologie*, Vol. I (Munich, 1920), pp. 552ff.
4. Max Weber, *Economy and Society*, ed. by G. Roth and C. Wittich (Berkeley, 1978), Vol. II, p. 835.
5. Max Weber, *Wissenschaft als Beruf* (Munich, 1919), p. 16.

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The reception of Weber's work by the first generation of critical theorists is characterized by the rejection of Weber's ambivalent and resigned commitment to modernity, on the basis of a far-reaching agreement with Weber's diagnosis of the dynamics of modernity. Horkheimer, Adorno and Marcuse accept that loss of freedom and loss of meaning have become socio-historical realities, and for this reason reject the claims to rationality that Weber associated with such processes.

Recently, Habermas has revised this traditional interpretation of Weber. He has criticized all attempts to overcome modernity by going beyond Weber to be the product of a contemporary illusion: that post-modernity could be achieved through anti-modernity.[6] According to Habermas, cultural rationalization has brought irreversible gains of theoretical, practical, and aesthetic rationality. The successful development of social rationalization, on the other hand, under the imperatives of economics growth and bureaucratic organization, results in no gains of freedom and autonomy for social agents. The question at present is: can the loss of freedom, diagnosed by Weber as an inevitable consequence of social rationalization, be reversed under conditions of loss of meaning, also diagnosed by Weber as a consequence of cultural rationalization, but without losing the cognitive achievements arising from that very process?[7] This question marks that transition "from the dialectic of enlightenment to the logic of reconstruction," to use Wellmer's term.[8] By focusing on the problem of modernity and rationalization, this article will analyze some implications of this transition. The acceptance of the Weberian diagnosis of modernity but the rejection of Western rationalism led Frankfurt School critical theory into aporias, but the turn from the dialectic of enlightenment to the logic of reconstruction has not resolved these; it has instead generated a new one of its own.

II

The convergence with Weber's diagnosis characterizes the writings of the Frankfurt School in 1940-45. The terms rationalization and instrumental rationality are used during this period[9] to refer to phenomena quite different than what had concerned Weber. Whereas Weber had analyzed the processes through which modern capitalism and bureaucracy had emerged,[10] Adorno,

6. Jürgen Habermas, "Die Moderne — Ein unvollendetes Projekt" (Frankfurt, 1980), pp. 23-25.

7. *Ibid.*, pp. 17ff.

8. Albrecht Wellmer, "Thesen über Vernunft, Emanzipation und Utopie," unpublished manuscript (Konstanz, 1980), p. 3.

9. Max Horkheimer and Theodor W. Adorno, *Dialektik der Aufklärung* (Frankfurt, 1980); Max Horkheimer, *Zur Kritik der instrumentellen Vernunft* (Frankfurt, 1967), German translation by Alfred Schmidt; Max Horkheimer, "Die Juden in Europa" (1939) and "The End of Reason" (1941), in *Zeitschrift für Sozialforschung*, reprint, edited by Alfred Schmidt (Munich, 1980); Max Horkheimer, "The Authoritarian State (1944)," in *Telos*, 15 (Spring, 1973); Herbert Marcuse, "Some Social Implications of Modern Technology," in Andrew Arato and Eike Gebhardt, eds., *The Essential Frankfurt Reader* (New York, 1978), pp. 138-162.

10. Cf. Max Weber, "Author's Introduction," *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, trans. by Talcott Parsons (New York, 1958); W. Schluchter, "Die Paradoxie der Rationalisierung," *Rationalismus der Weltbeherrschung* (Frankfurt, 1980), pp. 9-41.

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Horkheimer and Marcuse address the phenomena of national socialism and of industrial mass democracies, using the concept of instrumental rationality and Pollock's thesis of the "primacy of the political."[11] They assume that both social formations are characterized by the growing concentration of the production and distribution of capital and that this process has destroyed the market of free commodity exchange. This transformation in the economy has led to the primacy of the political and administrative state apparatus over the economy, social life, and the family. In a passage that characteristically correlates the transformations of the economy and of social organization with transformations in psychic structure, Horkheimer writes: "Today the individual ego has been absorbed by the pseudo-ego of totalitarian planning. Even those who hatch the totalitarian plan, despite and because of the huge mass and capital over which they dispose, have as little autonomy as those they control. The latter are organized in all sorts of groups, and in these the individual is but an element possessing no importance in himself. If he wants to preserve himself he must work as part of a team, ready and skilled in everything, whether in industry, agriculture or sport. In every camp he must defend his physical existence, his working, eating and sleeping place, must give and take cuffs and blows and submit to the toughest discipline. The responsibility of long-term planning for himself and his family has given way to the ability to adjust himself to mechanical tasks of the moment. The individual constricts himself."[12]

Although during this period there are differences between Marcuse on the one hand and Horkheimer and Adorno on the other concerning national socialism,[13] the following describes the sociological model that allowed Frankfurt School theorists to converge with Weber's thesis of the "iron cage" of modernity: (1) liberal capitalism and free-market competition related to the liberal state, patriarchal bourgeois family, rebellious personality type or the strong super-ego; (2) state capitalism (Adorno and Horkheimer) or monopoly capitalism (Marcuse) related to the fascist state, instrumental authoritarian family, authoritarian personality type, or the same economic phenomena related to mass democracies, the disappearance of the bourgeois family, submissive personality type and the "automatization" of the super ego.

11. According to Pollock, developments since the end of World War I have transformed "private capitalism" into "state capitalism." Cf. "State Capitalism," in *Zeitschrift*, Vol. 9, pp. 200-225. In "The Authoritarian State," Horkheimer follows Pollock, but distinguishes between state capitalism and integral etatism, or state socialism. According to Horkheimer, Stalinist Russia is not a new socio-economic order, but the most *consistent* form of authoritarian state capitalism. Cf. Horkheimer, "The End of Reason," in *Zeitschrift*, Vol. 9, pp. 374ff; on Pollock's thesis of the primacy of the political, see B. Brick and M. Postone, "Friedrich Pollock. The 'Primacy of the Political,' " *International Journal of Politics*, VI:3 (Fall 1976).

12. Horkheimer, "The End of Reason," *op.cit.*, p. 377.

13. While Neumann, Gurland and Kirchheimer defended the thesis of the continuity of national socialism with monopoly capitalism, Pollock, along with Adorno and Horkheimer, defended the newness of that social order. Marcuse agrees with Neumann's and Gurlands' continuity thesis, but he also introduces "technical" or "technological" rationality to characterize the new form of domination emerging under national socialism. See "Some Social Implications of Modern Technology," *op.cit.*; Helmut Dubiel and Alfons Söllner, eds., *Wirtschaft, Recht und Staat im Nationalsozialismus* (Frankfurt, 1981), pp. 23ff.

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By rationalization, Adorno, Horkheimer and Marcuse mean the following phenomena: Administrative and political domination extends into all spheres of social life by means of ever more efficient and predictable organizational techniques developed by institutions like the factory, the army, the bureaucracy, schools, and the culture industry. This is made possible by the application of science and technology not only to the domination of external nature, but to the control of interpersonal relations and the manipulation of internal nature.[14] Such a control apparatus functions by fragmenting processes of work and production into simple homogeneous units; this fragmentation is accompanied by social atomization within and outside the organizational unit. Within organizations, the cooperation of individuals also is subject to the rules and regulations of the apparatus; outside the organizational unit, the destruction of the economic, educational and psychological function of the family delivers the individual to the impersonal forces of mass society. To survive at all, the individual must now adapt to the apparatus.

The instrumental rationalization of social life generates an epistemic illusion: the more efficient, planned, scientific and immediate domination becomes, the more general, impersonal and anonymous it seems. Adorno, Horkheimer and Marcuse follow Lukacs in identifying rationalization with reification.[15] But whereas Lukacs emphasizes the *phantom objectivity* of the social world, which is nonetheless a product of the praxis of socialized individuals, the Frankfurt School theorists emphasize the *totalizing anonymity* of domination, which thereby ceases to appear as domination. The more immediate domination becomes, the less it can be grasped as such.

The consequence of the instrumental rationalization of social life and of the social-epistemic illusions generated by it is a loss of freedom. But whereas Weber had distinguished between the rationalization o the economy, law and administration, and modern rationalism,[16] Marcuse, Horkheimer and Adorno

14. Cf. Pollock's statement in "State Capitalism": "But once this principle of 'rationalization' has become mandatory for all public activities, it will be applied in spheres which previously were the sanctuary of guesswork, routine and muddling through: military procedures, the conduct of war, behavior towards public opinion, application of the coercive power of the state, foreign trade and foreign policy" (p. 206), and further, "the Nazi success may be better explained as the rational application of the best available methods in all fields.... It is well to recall in this connection that German industry originally learned scientific management from America" (*ibid.*, note 2).

15. Despite many passages in *The Dialectic of the Enlightenment* in which rationalization and reification are linked to the dominance of exchange value and of the commodity form in social life, it is not the reification caused by the commodity form as such that concerns Adorno and Horkheimer, but the natural history of humanity in which reason functions as an instrument of domination. Lukacs, by contrast, analyzes the phenomena of rationalization with specific reference to the commodity form alone. Cf. *History and Class Consciousness*, trans. by Rodney Livingstone (Cambridge, Mass., 1971), pp. 97ff.

16. The distinction between social rationalization and cultural rationalism is made clear by Weber in his *Religionssoziologie*. Modern cultural rationalism is preceded by the rationalization of world views and religion. In this context, rationalization means the intellectual systematization of the relations between God and world, the clarification of God's ethical relation to the world and the decline in the role of magic. Cf. Weber, *Religionssoziologie, op.cit.*, Vol. I, p. 512; Talcott Parsons, *The Structure of Social Action*, Vol. II (New York, 1968), pp. 539-578; Schluchter, "Die Paradoxie der Rationalisierung," *op.cit.*, pp. 9-41; and Habermas, "Max Webers Theorie der Rationalisierung," chapter 2, in *Theorie des kommunikativen Handelns*.

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collapse both dimensions and view rationalization as an expression of the deep structure of Western reason. The carriers of instrumental reason are no longer socially and historicall specific agents, but the species itself. The discourse of rationalization shifts from a socially specific to a global-anthrhopological level. The critique of the *instrumental rationalization of society* is thereby transformed into a critique of the *structure of Western reason.*

In *The Dialectic of Enlightenment,* Adorno and Horkheimer maintain that the two moments constituting cultural rationalism for Weber — namely, the value of the autonomous personality and the radical separation of nature from culture[17] — are incompatible. In *The Critique of Instrumental Reason,* Horkheimer analyzes the incompatibility between the value of autonomy and the third moment of cultural rationalization — the differentiation of reason into irreconcilable value spheres.[18] Between these three aspects of cultural rationalism — the radical separation of nature from culture, the value of the autonomous personality, and the differentiation of a once-unified reason into value spheres — there is not only an incompatibility, but an antagonism. This antagonism unfolds both as a dialectic of culture and a dialectic of the personality, whose final consequence is the self-destruction of reason and the disappearance of the autonomous personality.

Notwithstanding differences, both *The Dialectic of Enlightenment* and *The Critique of Instrumental Reason* vacillate between the weaker claim that Western reason had historically grounded the value of autonomy and the stronger claim that the structure of Western reason as such is incompatible with autonomy. The self-destruction of reason is not a historically contingent occurrence, but the culmination of the drive to domination that underlies Western rationality. Despite these vacillations, it is the stronger thesis that must be attributed to Horkheimer and Adorno, for both drive the cultural dialectic of rationalization to a deeper structure, namely, to the natural history of humanity. The radical separation of nature from culture or of the meaningless infinite world from the abstract thinking and willing subject contains the seeds of an unresolved antagonism between them, which in the course of civilization must be continuously re-enacted.

The Homeric self, who distinguishes between the dark forces of nature and civilization, expresses the original fear of humanity from the other. Myth that relates the story of how the hero constitutes his identity by repressing the manifoldness of nature also expresses the obverse of this story. Humanity pays for overcoming the fear of the other by internalizing the victim. Odysseus escapes the call of the sirens only by subjecting himself willingly to their torture. The act of sacrifice repeatedly enacts the identity of humans with the dark forces of nature, in order to allow them to purge the nature within humanity itself. If the task of culture is to establish identity of self over the otherness of nature, reason is the instrument by which this is accomplished.

17. On the value of the autonomous personality, see Weber, *The Methodology of the Social Sciences, op.cit.,* p. 8; on the separation of nature from culture, *ibid.,* p. 72.

18. On the differentiation of reason into irreconcilable value spheres, see Weber, *Religionssoziologie, op.cit.,* vol. II, p. 371; "Wissenschaft als Beruf," p. 27.

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The rationality of myth, as well as of the Enlightenment which replaces myth, is one that destroys in the very act of comprehending. Reason abstracts, seeks to comprehend through concepts and names. Abstraction, which can grasp the concrete only insofar as it reduces it to identity, also liquidates the otherness of the other. With relentless rhetoric, Adorno and Horkheimer drive the irrationality of cultural rationalization to its sources, namely, to the identity logic which is the deep structure of Western reason.[19]

But here the first aporia of the project of a critical theory of society, as conceived by Adorno and Horkheimer, becomes apparent: *If the plight of the Enlightenment and of cultural rationalization only reveals the culmination of an identity logic, constitutive of reason, then the theory of the dialectic of the enlightenment, which is carried out with the tools of this very same reason, perpetrates the very structure of domination it condemns.* The critique of enlightenment is cursed by the same burden as enlightenment itself. This aporia, which is acknowledged by Adorno and Horkheimer, is not resolved but redeemed through the hope that the critique of enlightenment can nonetheless *evoke* the utopian principle of non-identitary logic, which it must deny as soon as it would articulate it discursively.

Adorno's and Horkheimer's pessimism, the inability to offer a diagnosis to overcome enlightenment and cultural rationalization, cannot be explained by the darkness of human history at that point in time alone. Rather, this pessimism is embedded in the very structure of the aporetic discourse which they call "the dialectic of enlightenment." The end of enlightenment, the end of "the natural sinfulness of humanity" (*Naturverfallenheit der Menschen*) *cannot* be stated discursively. If enlightenment is the culmination of identity logic, then its overcoming can only be a matter of giving back to the non-identical, the suppressed and the dominated their right *to be*. Since even language itself is burdened by the curse of the concept, which represses the other in the very act of naming it, we can only evoke the other but we cannot name it. Like the God of the Jewish tradition who must not be named but evoked, the utopian transcendence of the history of reason cannot be named but reinvoked in the memory of men. This recovery of the non-identical is the task of the true work of art: "That moment in the art work by means of which it transcends reality...does not consist in the attained harmony, in the questionable unity of form and content, inner and outer, individual and society, but rather, in those traces, through which discrepancy appears, and the passionate striving towards identity is necessarily shattered."[20]

The *Critique of Instrumental Reason*, which traces the inevitable

19. The critique of the identity logic underlying Western reason had been a concern of Adorno's since his 1931 lecture on "The Actuality of Philosophy," *Telos*, 31 (Spring 1977). Whatever differences may exist between Adorno and Horkheimer on this question, the search for a non-discursive, non-identitarian logic, be it in an esoteric philosophy of language, in symbol, or in the collective unconscious of the species, is common to both. Dubiel points to the collaboration of other members of the Institute around the text of *The Dialectic of the Enlightenment,* in *Wissenschaftsorganisation und politische Erfahrung* (Frankfurt, 1978), pp. 107ff; on the critique of identity logic, cf. M. Theunissen, *Gesellschaft und Geschichte: Zur Kritik der kritischen Theorie* (Berlin, 1969), p. 18.

20. *Dialektik der Aufklarung, op.cit.*, p. 117.

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destruction of the "objective reason," embodied in premodern metaphysical and cosmological conceptions of the world, by the "subjective," utilitarian and skeptic reason of the moderns, does not reach a different conclusion than this redemptive appeal to the utopian moment of the non-identical. Horkheimer does not assert that the differentiation of reason into irreconcilable value spheres in modernity can be overcome by a philosophy of "substantive Reason." Philosophy cannot totalize; it cannot reunite the value of the autonomous personality with a unified concept of the world and society. It also shares the intentions of the art work to articulate the right of the other, of the non-identical, to be. It can accomplish this task insofar as it rejects the burden of the concept and returns to the word's forgotten, repressed meanings. Philosophy gives "the mute witnesses of language" their voice.

The flight of critique from the immanent emancipatory ideals of socially and historically situated agents to the esoteric heights of absolute spirit means nothing less than that the fate of modernity can only be overcome by its transfiguration.[21] If social rationalization destroys the possibility of exercising freedom and if cultural rationalization destroys the desire for freedom, then no less than an apocalyptic reversal of the fate of the moderns and a break in the continuum of history can initiate the emancipatory dynamic. Critical theory becomes the messenger of the apocalypse.

Undoubtedly, it is possible to interpret Adorno and Horkheimer during this period in a more sympathetic and less aporetic way. The prospect of an emancipated humanity, it could be argued, can only be realized through a non-regressive reconciliation with nature and through a new ontology of self and other, from the standpoint of which the constitution of self-identity would mean neither the destructive denial of the other nor of the otherness within the self. Overcoming the natural history of humanity would imply reversing the civilizing process that has brought with it the domination of external nature and the repression of internal nature. Social and cultural rationalization have hitherto meant the suppression of mimesis by conscious adaptation and domination. But the domination of nature has turned against the subject; disenchantment has been internalized. Is a reconciliation with internal and external nature, a reversal in the course of the civilizing process from the suppression of mimesis in the name of domination to the renewed expression of man's kinship with nature under conditions of an end to domination not possible?

Implicit in this plea for a non-regressive reconciliation with nature is a theory of ontogenetic and phylogenetic development, which should explain the mechanism by which the domination of external nature leads to the subordination of humans to each other and to the suppression of internal nature. The dynamics of this natural history of humanity are assumed by Adorno and Horkheimer, but never clarified. The extremely obscure passages on internalization, projection and the formation of the self suggest and even require Marcuse's eventual utilization of Freud's instinct theory in *Eros and*

21. Joel Whitebook, "The Problem of Nature in Habermas," *Telos*, 40 (Summer 1979).

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Civilization to explain the dynamics of the civilizing process. But Marcuse's project is no less aporetic than the utopian critique of identity logic.

It is unnecessary here to recapitulate in detail Marcuse's critical reappropriation of Freud's theory of civilization. The oft-mentioned discrepancy between Freud's metapsychology and his actual clinical writings is analyzed by Marcuse in a new light. The attempt to set up a parallelism between ontogenetic and phylogenetic stages of development is not an illicit and speculative confusion of levels. Marcuse justifies this parallelism precisely because human history has not ceased to be natural history: individuation and ego formation still take place through the repression of the pleasure principle by the reality principle embodied in culture. This reality principle represents not only the necessity of labor common to all human societies, but articulates structures of superfluous domination embodied in class relations as well. In this regard, what distinguishes industrial-technological civilization from past structures of organized domination is the following: the very objective conditions that would make the overcoming of industrial-technological civilization possible also prevent the subjective conditions necessary for this transformation from emerging. The paradox of rationalization consists in the fact that the very conditions that could lead to a reversal of loss of freedom cannot be perceived by individuals under conditions of loss of meaning.

In industrial-technological civilization the real possibility of ending the loss of freedom is provided by the transformation of science and technology into productive forces and by the subsequent elimination of immediate labor from the work process. Labor is no longer experienced by the individual as the painful exertion of organic energy to accomplish a specific task. The labor process becomes impersonal and is increasingly dependent upon the organization and coordination of collective human effort. The diminishing significance of labor in the work process, already analyzed by Marx in the *Grundrisse,*[22] does not result in a corresponding decline of socio-cultural control over the individual. Quite to the contrary, the impersonalization and rationalization of authority relations brings with it a corresponding transformation in the dynamics of individual identity formation. With the decline of the role of the father in the family, the struggle against authority loses its focus: the self cannot achieve individuation, for, bereft of personal figures against whom to struggle, he can no longer experience the highly personal and idiosyncratic processes of individuating identity formation. Aggression that cannot be discharged in the Oedipal struggle against a human figure is subsequently internalized and generates guilt.[23]

22. Karl Marx, *The Grundrisse,* trans. by Martin Nicolaus (London, 1973), pp. 704ff.

23. The most significant aspect of Marcuse's revision of Freud is his attempt to disclose the social content of aggression. Marcuse rejects Freud's dialectic of Eros and Thanatos on the ground that Freud has ignored the social modification of the death instinct. According to Marcuse, Thanatos is not an unequivocal principle of destruction and aggression, but expresses a wish for eternity, for the ending of all time, which becomes stronger in civilization as the denial of pleasure is increasingly subject to the organized structure of repression. The growth of the instincts of death and aggression is the obverse side of the repression of pleasure through the domination exercised by labor time.

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The most far-reaching consequence of the disappearance of the autonomous personality is the weakening of the "living bonds between the individual and his culture." The reality principle is no longer internalized and sublimated by individuals in the same manner, because culture is no longer considered responsible for the painful sacrifices and sublimations suffered by the self. Ethical substance disappears and this dries up the cultural sources of group revolt, which had hitherto been carried out in the name of the memories of past rebellions. The loss of culture as a repository of collective memory threatens the very dynamic of civilization itself: revolt, repression and renewed revolt. When culture ceases to be a living reality the memory of unfulfilled and betrayed promises in the name of which the revolt of the repressed was carried out ceases to be a historical possibility in the present.

The one-dimensionality of industrial-technological civilization leads the critical theory of society into a self-reflexive paradox: *the historical dynamics of the very object of inquiry make obsolete the categories through which this object can be comprehended.* Marcuse had justified Freud's attempt to set up a parallelism between ontogenetic and phylogenetic stages of development on the ground that human history had not ceased to be natural history and that in the course of individuation and ego formation, the human person recapitulated the traumas of the species. As long as this history remained unmastered, it could be grasped as the frozen continuity of the past in the present which the individual and the species recapitulated blindly. With the transition to organized capitalism, with the weakening of the "living bonds between the individual and his culture," with the disappearance of the bourgeois family, the categories of psychoanalysis reach their cognitive limit. This process obliterates the hitherto governing mechanism of the internalization of the oppressor by the oppressed, as well as the sources of memory that guide future revolt. But it was this unconscious mechanism that had given hitherto existing history the character of natural history and that had made the parallelism between ontogenesis and phylogenesis possible. Marcuse cannot preclude the possibility that the socialization patterns of industrial-technological society have advanced so far as to make the very categories of psychoanalysis obsolete.

Marcuse attempts to resolve this paradox — that the very object of inquiry makes the categories through which this inquiry is carried out obsolete — through an appeal to the redemptive function of memory.[24] The transfiguration of modern industrial-technological civilization must begin with an act of remembrance which sets free the forgotten, repressed and denied meanings, utopian hopes and aspirations of past revolts. Instead of a critique of Western ontology and of identity logic, Marcuse undertakes to reconstruct the latent utopian dimension of Western ontology. By revealing the polarities of Logos and Eros, of the endless passage of time and the wish to transcend all time, of the bad infinity of the existent (*die Seienden*) and the fullness of Being (*das Vollkommenheit des Seins*) to be the dual structures

24. Michael Löwy, "Marcuse and Benjamin: The Romantic Dimension," *Telos*, 44 (Summer 1980).

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within which Western ontology unfolds, Marcuse upholds the redemptive function of memory.

But this redemptive memory cannot be reactivated within the continuum of history, precisely because history now unfolds in such a way as to deny its own past, its own historicity. The one-dimensional society created by the industrial-technological world obliterates the ontological horizon within which it has become and in which it unfolds. This means that the critical theory of society which speaks in the name of redemptive memory is itself outside the historical continuum; in an effort to negate the domination of time, it appeals to the memory of the wish to end all time from a point outside time. Reviving the primordial polarities between eros and logos, Narcissus and Orpheus, Marcuse seeks to disclose the revolutionary potential of an emancipated sensuality. Narcissus emerges as the messenger of a new ontological principle. To be transformed into a new ethics the subversive of this new sensuality must again immerse itself in the tissues of history; but according to the one-dimensionality thesis, there can be no collective historical carriers of this process.

If, however, the very development of the object of inquiry makes obsolete the categories through which it can be grasped and if, moreover, the subversive potential of the redemptive memory evoked by theory remains outside the historical continuum, then has not critical theory acknowledged the aporia, namely, the conditions of its own impossibility? Critical theory analyzes a subsisting society from the standpoint of the possible transformations of its ground structure, and interprets emerging need articulations and conflicts in light of this anticipatory transformation. *But if it is exactly the continuum of history that critique must reject, then the vision of the emancipated society which it articulates becomes a privileged mystery that cannot be related to the immanent self-understanding of needs and conflicts articulated from within the continuum of the historical process.* Critical theory must either revise the one-dimensionality thesis or it must question its very possibility.[25] This applies not only to Marcuse, but to the "critique of instrumental reason" in general. If it is assumed that social rationalization has eliminated all crises and conflict tendencies within the social structure and that cultural rationalization has destroyed the autonomous personality type, then critical theory no longer moves within the horizon of *prospective* future transformation, but must retreat into the *retrospective* stance of past hope and remembrance. This retreat from the

25. Cf. Claus Offe, "Technik und Eindimensionalität: Eine Version der Technokratiethese?" in *Antworten auf Herbert Marcuse,* ed. by Jürgen Habermas (Frankfurt, 1968), pp. 86-87. In subsequent writings, Marcuse modified the one-dimensionality thesis only to the extent that he allowed the emergence of oppositional needs that could not be satisfied by the system itself. But the sociological analysis of industrial-technological society, and the localization of social conflict in the contradiction between the demands of superfluous domination and the wishes for happiness and fulfillment of a constant anthropological human nature was not modified. To that extent, the one-dimensionality thesis remains because the conflicts analyzed by Marcuse are not immanent structural crises of the social system itself. Cf. *Gespräche mit Herbert Marcuse,* ed. by Bovenschen, Habermas, *et al.* (Frankfurt, 1978), pp. 26ff.

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present into the past is burdened with the additional irony that the oppressive totalization of the historical process condemned by critique, i.e., the impossibility of a break in the historical continuum, is recapitulated in the stance of the theory towards the present. The present is no longer viewed as a contingent moment that can lead into the future, but is viewed as an "eternal now," which recapitulates *ad infinitum* the conceptual structure already grasped by the philosopher to be the riddle of history. Critical theory becomes a retrospective monologue of the critical thinker upon the totality of this historical process, for it views the lived present not under the perspective of possible future transformation, but from the standpoint of the past. Yet, the very possibility of the project of critique requires first an analysis of the immanent conflict and crises potentials of the present and, second, the interpretation of such crises and conflicts from the standpoint of an anticipated emancipatory praxis. Either the empirical diagnosis of the one-dimensionality of social and cultural rationalization processes must be revised, or critical theory must admit the conditions of its own historical impossibility.

III

To use a philosophical analogy to express the difference between the views of the Frankfurt School and Habermas on modernity, one could say that whereas Marcuse, Horkheimer and Adorno agree with the young Hegel in seeing modernity as a "tragedy and comedy of ethical life," Habermas shares the sobriety of the older Hegel, who saw in the *Entzweiung* of ethical life irreversible gains of freedom and autonomy.[26] Of course, this is more than an analogy. Since the *Strukturwandel der Oeffentlichkeit* and the early essays of the unredeemed democratic-utopian content of natural law theories, Habermas has focused on the inconsistency between the utopian kernel of bourgeois principles of legitimation — the consensus of all as the basis of a just order — and the institutional contradictions of an objective spirit that had to limit this utopian promise on the basis of property and class distinctions.[27] However, until the *Legitimation Crisis* this difference of orientation had not led Habermas to revise the one-dimensionality thesis. Even "Technology and Science as Ideology," which contained all the elements of Habermas' rejection of the demand for a transfiguration of modernity, did not depart from the thesis of the one-dimensionality of industrial-technological societies.[28] As opposed to Weber, who saw social rationalization

26. As Riedel has shown, there is a tradition of analyzing modernity quite distinct from the Weberian one, which runs from neo-Aristotelianism to British political economy and to Hegel. See Manfred Riedel, "Hegels Begriff der bürgerlichen Gesellschaft und das Problem seines geschichtlichen Ursprungs," in *Materialien zu Hegels Rechtsphilosophie* (Frankfurt, 1974), pp. 247ff. For this tradition, the crucial aspect of modernity is the separation of *oikos* and *polis*, or of institutional differentiation. In *Strukturwandel der Oeffentlichkeit*, Habermas was more concerned with the problem of institutional differentiation than with that of cultural differentiation. Cf. *Strukturwandel* (Frankfurt, 1974), pp. 13-101. For Habermas' new reading of Hegel's philosophy, which combines both sets of questions, cf. "Können komplexe Gesellschaften eine vernünftige Identität ausbilden?" in *Zur Rekonstruktion des historischen Materialismus* (Frankfurt, 1976), pp. 92-129.

27. Habermas, *Strukturwandel, op.cit.*, pp. 101-113.

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processes in terms of the extension of purposive-rational action systems alone, Habermas argued that a categorical distinction needed to be made between the rationalization of communicative action structures on the one hand and those of purposive-rational and strategic action types on the other. Whereas the rationalization of the latter meant the development of the productive forces and the extension of technical control, the rationalization of communicative action would entail a decreasing degree of repressiveness and rigidity, increasing role distance and the flexible application of norms — socialization without repression. This new mode of socialization would correspond at the institutional level to a new principle of social organization, according to which action-orienting norms and principles would be generated in processes of public and unlimited discussion. The new principle of social organization would be that of discursive will formation through communication free from domination.[29] Nonetheless, the claim that social rationalization could lead to new emanicpatory modes of socialization and social organization remained a hypothetical projection, ungrounded in actual social developments. Habermas could point to no dialectic that would reverse the distortions caused by the one-sided rationalization of purposive-rational action, in the direction of an emancipatory rationality.

It is this dialectic that the *Legitimation Crisis* analyzes: the rationalization of social life, or the extension of subsystems of purposive-rational action beyond the confines of the market, law and the administration, generates a dynamic whose consequences may undermine the very legitimacy of such rationalization processes. According to Horkheimer, Adorno and Marcuse the rationalization of social life generated an epistemic illusion. The more efficient, planned, scientific and immediate administrative control becomes, the more general, anonymous and impersonal does it seem; the more immediate domination becomes the less it is understood to be domination. By contrast, Habermas argues that the extension of administrative-instrumental control may lead to its own process of demystification. Domination does not become anonymous. As the process of its own generation becomes transparent through the apparent intervention of the political apparatus into all domains of social life, domination relations may be subjected to increased legitimation demands.

At the methodological level, Habermas rejects the correlations established by the Frankfurt School between the level of the organization of the productive forces, the institutional framework of society and personality types, in favor of a more differentiated sociological framework. This new methodological framework allows him to elaborate a new concept of crisis. Whereas system-integrative frameworks — economy, the world market and administration — enter into crises as they become dysfunctional, only those dysfunctionalities that generate crises in the self-understanding of individuals and collectivities such as to place into question accepted patterns of socialization and legitimation deserve to be called crises in the sense required

28. Jürgen Habermas, *Wissenschaft und Technik als Ideologie* (Frankfurt, 1974), pp. 62ff.
29. *Ibid.*, p. 98.

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by critical theory.[30]

The crux of Habermas' argument is the analysis of those mechanisms through which economic and administrative rationality crises can lead to a legitimation and motivation crisis. In late capitalist societies such crises can occur only when, under conditions of the repoliticization of the relations of production, the depoliticization of the population and their manipulation to accept technocratic, non-participatory ideologies can no longer be secured. But — and this is Habermas' ground for rejecting the thesis of the reification of domination — *the manipulative production of legitimation becomes destructive as soon as the mode of its production becomes visible:* "there is no administrative generation of meaning."[31] The very process of subjecting hitherto private sectors of life such as education, family planning, child rearing, regional and city planning, to administrative control means the encroachment of the political system upon the cultural, with the consequence that the unthematized content of traditions as well as administrative decision-making mechanisms become subject to public discussion and controversy. Whether these processes can lead to an increased demand for participation and legitimation depends on the presence of meaning and value orientations within the system that could be reactivated to generate new motivational patterns for individuals. A crisis of legitimation can be expected when expectations are generated that cannot be satisfied within available patterns of value and through other compensatory mechanisms.[32] Legitimation crises must be based upon a motivational crisis.

Here the argument of *Legitimation Crisis* becomes extremely hypothetical: Habermas points to the decline of civic, familial and vocational privatisms, and maintains that bourgeois and pre-bourgeois traditions have been replaced by ideologies, like scientism, universalistic morality and post-auratic art that cannot prevent the decline of these privatisms.[33] The claim that these traditions and their remnants cannot be reactivated in such a way as to counteract the erosion of these motivational structures or to channel them in an authoritarian and submissive direction is supported by the following argument: "there can be no equivalent for the used-up content of traditions because the logic of the development of normative structures does not allow this."[34] Habermas assumes not that the content alone, but also that the form of tradition as a form of legitimation has entered into crisis. The contemporary forms of dominant bourgeois ideologies — scientism, post-auratic art and universalistic morality — have undergone "irreversible

30. Jürgen Habermas, *Legitimationsprobleme im Spätkapitalismus* (Frankfurt, 1973), pp. 12ff.

31. *Ibid.*, p. 99.

32. Especially significant is the replacement of the market mechanism by the state in the public sectors of transportation, health, construction and leisure. This process generates a new orientation towards work, namely, an orientation to concrete use-values. This new orientation is in turn significant for explaining the replacement of professional privatism by radical professionalism among social workers, doctors, teachers, and public employees of various sorts. Cf. *Legitimationsprobleme, op.cit.*, pp. 94-95.

33. *Ibid.*, pp. 117ff.

34. *Ibid.*, p. 106.

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developments which follow an internal logic"[35] and which cannot be reversed except at the cost of massive psychological regressions.

Of course, Habermas cannot preclude the possibility of such massive reversals and psychological regressions any more than Marcuse could preclude the emergence of a new socialization type that would make the categories of psychoanalysis obsolete. The structural parallelism between the two claims needs to be taken seriously: in order to establish that motivational crises can occur such as to trigger off legitimation crises, Habermas must claim that according to the remnants of bourgeois ideologies, the decline of civic, familial and professional privatisms can be reversed only at the cost of psychological regressions; but Habermas also admits that these ideologies have become so reified that new patterns of individual and collective identity formations such as would uncouple power from truth, authority from the belief in its legitimacy, and social value from meaning, may emerge. This new socialization type would mean that social systems would constitute their identities independently of the process of individuation of their members. The consquence of societal rationalization, then, would be not socialization without repression, but socialization without individuation.[36]

Habermas has to entertain two contradictory propositions: either the remnants of bourgeois ideologies still have an emancipatory truth content or they have no truth content at all, for the very question of the cognitive value of their content is becoming irrelevant. If the latter alternative is the case, then the very project of critique would disappear, for it would be made obsolete by the process of social evolution, and by the emergence of socialization without individuation. The hypothetical nature of this argument points to a central problem in Habermas' writings, which has been well analyzed by Jean Cohen: whereas Habermas' early political writings and the *Strukturwandel* practiced the method of immanent critique but reproduced the Frankfurt School diagnosis that under conditions of late capitalism crisis tendencies were blocked, the *Legitimation Crisis* reveals the crisis tendencies of late capitalism, but is unable to locate values and norms in the life world in appeal to which theory could ground the possibility of transforming crises into emancipatory practice.[37] Crises and critique threaten once again to become disjointed. The analysis of social conflict and crises and their interpretation in light of anticipated future emancipatory practice drift apart.

Habermas has attempted to solve this problem by shifting from the theoretical strategy of critique to that of reconstruction.[38] The reconstruction

35. *Ibid.*, p. 117.

36. *Ibid.*, pp. 172ff.

37. Jean Cohen, "Why More Political Theory?" *Telos*, 40 (Summer 1979), pp. 86ff.

38. The distinction between critique and reconstruction was drawn to separate the two meanings of self-reflection from one another, after they had been conflated in *Knowledge and Human Interests*. On the one hand, by self-reflection, Habermas meant the general philosophical reconstruction of the presuppositions and conditions of valid knowledge and action and, on the other, the reflection upon the specific formative history of a particular individual or group subject. Cf. Thomas McCarthy, *The Critical Theory of Jürgen Habermas* (Boston, 1979), pp. 94ff. This would imply a division of labor between the strategies of critique and reconstruction, and not the replacement of the first by the second. But it seems to me that the

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of the development of phylogenetic and ontogenetic capacities of speech, action and interaction intends to show that the gloomy perspective entertained at the end of the *Legitimationsprobleme* cannot be the case — where this "can" is ambiguous between a "should not" and an "is not." It is now argued that according to the deep-seated anthropological structure of individual and collective identity formations, the species can only reproduce itself by subjecting the cognitive content of claims to truth and rightfulness to validation. If such claims can be completely disassociated from their validity content, then neither individual nor collective learning mechanisms could take place. Whereas Adorno and Horkheimer claimed that the natural history of humanity had proved reason to be an instrument of domination, Habermas maintains that this natural history could not have occurred if the minimal claim of reason, namely the redemption of validity claims through processes of reasoning could not have been fulfilled.[39] Habermas does not view the history of Western humanity as a dialectic of enlightenment, but as the unfolding of the utopian promise of an unredeemed logic of discursive rationality. This shift from the dialectic of enlightenment to the logic of reconstruction has not reunited the perspectives of crisis and critique, of the analysis of social conflict potentials and their interpretation in light of future emancipatory practice. Instead, it has led critical theory into yet a third aporia.

The emergence of a dualistic ontology that radically separates nature from culture, the ideal of an autonomous subjectivity that represses inner nature, and the separation of a once-unified reason into the spheres of science, religion, aesthetics, ethics and jurisprudence are those aspects of modern rationalism most clearly rejected and criticized by Horkheimer, Adorno and Marcuse. Under the category of "cultural differentiation," Habermas has recently given a more positive evaluation of this process than ever before.[40] This diagnosis entails not only a break with the utopian ideals of a transfiguration of Western rationality, but a rejection of the pessimistic Weberian evaluation of the process of *Sinnverlust* as well. The destruction of the unity of reason does not mean an irreversible loss of rationality.

Even if at the substantive level the loss of meaning is irreversible, at the *formal level of argumentation* the unity of reason is preserved in the very logic of those communication structures through which hypothetical validity claims

theoretical strategy of reconstruction aimed at solving a specific problem that belonged to the strategy of critique, namely, the absence of immanent emancipatory norms in late capitalist societies. The logic of reconstruction attempts to reactivate the emancipatory potential of the hollow formalisms and decisionisms of the late capitalist bourgeois sphere. My claim is that this strategy of reactivation is misguided, because it moves over and beyond the heads of specific, socially and historically situated agents and their life worlds.

39. Cf. "I would even defend the thesis that the development of these normative structures is the pacemaker of social evolution, for new principles of social organization mean new forms of social integration; and the latter, in turn, first make it possible to implement available productive forces or to generate new ones, as well as making possible a heightening of social complexity." Habermas, "Historical Materialism and the Development of Normative Structures," in *Communication and Evolution of Society,* trans. by T. McCarthy (Boston, 1979), p. 120.

40. "Die Moderne — Ein unvollendetes Projekt," *op.cit.,* p. 18; "Max Webers Theorie der Rationalisierung," *Theorie des kommunikativen Handelns* (forthcoming), chapter 2.

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can be redeemed.[41] The search in critical theory for a utopian negation of the instrumental reason of the moderns is misguided. The new paradigm of rationality is not substantive but *discursive*; it thematizes not the *content* but the *form* of those necessary and indispensable argumentation procedures, with reference to which the validity claims of truth, justice and rightness can be settled. The "unfulfilled project of modernity," namely, the emancipatory rationalization of communicative action patterns and institutional structures, is now conceptualized along an evolutionary model. Such rationalization is described as the attainment of higher stages of reflexivity, universality and individuality. While the rationalization of individual and collective identities would correspond to the emergence of reflexive, autonomous, post-conventional identity patterns, the rationalization of institutional structures is understood as "democratic will formation on generalizable interests."

These ideals are not new in Habermas' work. What is new is the theoretical strategy. Whereas previously the unfulfilled promise of modernity was described as the failure of a bourgeois universalism that informed the life world, today this unfulfilled promise is seen as the attainment of individual and collective levels of new competence. Whereas once, distorted communication patterns were located in the past history of individuals and collectivities, in a history that had not yet been mastered, this same distortion is now seen as being rooted either in the inability of individuals and collectivities or in the lack of enabling conditions, or both, which would allow them to achieve the transition to a higher stage. Both the ideals of post-conventional individual and collective identity formation and of discursive will articulation on generalizable interests are seen as the higher stage of practical rationality towards which the burnt-out content of bourgeois universalistic traditions ought to evolve. The cognitive truth content of these traditions, it is maintained, requires the thematization of new modes of socialization and of new principles of social organization. Given, however, that these ideals *are not* articulated and publicly thematized in late capitalism, Habermas must reduce the social and historical world into a set of necessary but insufficient conditions, enabling or retarding the theoretically defined stage of a new evolutionary leap. This conception of emancipated rationality does not emerge from the life world, but a theoretically articulated rationality seeks to become embodied in the life world. This results in the third aporia of critical theory: *the more the theoretical conditions for the fulfillment of modernity are elaborated in the form of an evolutionary theory of discursive rationality, the further removed does the prospect of an emancipated society appear, for a counterfactually conceived structure of discursive rationality articulates an emancipatory ideal that cannot guide emancipatory praxis, since it belongs to the concrete life-history of no social subjects, but to the evolutionary potential of the species in general.*

This aporia is different from previous ones. In the case of Horkheimer, Adorno and Marcuse, the conviction that social crises and conflict tendencies were eliminated introduced a rift between a hopeless present and the

41. *Theorie des kommunikativen Handelns, op.cit.*, p. 452.

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insistence on the redemption of past hope. This led critique from a future prospective stance into a retrospective philosophy of history. In Habermas' case, the utopian intentions of critique have shifted from the redemption of past hope to the prospective articulation of the counterfactuals of "an empirical philosophy of history with a practical (political) intent."[42]

IV

Critical theory today is in a situation not unlike that in which earlier members of the Frankfurt School found themselves after emigration, for there is no identifiable agent of social transformation to whom critical theory is addressed, only an anonymous subject — "mankind as such" — and no group in particular.[43] The claim that there *are no* social and historical agents to whose self-understanding critique *can* be addressed must be distinguished from the claim that there are no social and historical agents to whose self-understanding theory in its present form *could* address itself. The latter and not the former is today the case. Whereas the aporetic structure of early critical theory was rooted in the dichotomy between an explosive utopian vision and the absence of agents who could realize this vision, the aporetic structure of Habermas' work is rooted in the dichotomy between a diffuse crisis potential and a counterfactual emancipatory ideal in which no social agent can recognize himself as addressee. Ironically, this diffuse crisis potential has articulated itself in various protest movements, in the women's movement, the ecology and grass-root democracy movements, for example, precisely at a point when the internal transformations of critical theory have carried it from a negation to an affirmation of the cultural legacy of the enlightenment. It would be trivial to suggest that one extricate oneself from this situation by choosing partisanship for one or another movement. Theoretical impasses cannot be solved by leaps of faith, but neither can the project of a critical theory of society with emancipatory intent abdicate partnership in that self-formative dialogue of theory and practice.

To paraphrase Markus, the transcendental precondition of the possibility of critique is the existence of empirical lived crises and protests, "which in their content 'transcend' the present and are directed towards a new organization of society and new forms of life."[44] Theory *explains* such crises and protests and the needs that are articulated through them insofar as it demonstrates "their emergence to be the result of present forms of life activities." Theory *interprets* them by showing the "impossibility of their satisfaction under given *social* conditions, thereby opening the way to think about an *alternative* of social organization."[45]

This distinction between the explanatory and interpretive aspects of critique can also be named the dimensions of *crises diagnosis* and the

42. "Literaturbericht zur philosophischen Diskussion um Marx und Marxismus," in *Theorie und Praxis* (Neuwied, 1963), pp. 261-335.

43. McCarthy, *The Critical Theory of Jürgen Habermas, op.cit.*, p. 386.

44. György Markus, "Practical-Social Rationality in Marx — A Dialectical Critique," Part 2, *Dialectical Anthropology*, V:1 (1980), p. 12.

45. *Ibid.*, pp. 22-23.

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anticipatory critique of present life forms in light of a projected future praxis. Without the explanatory dimension, critical theory becomes dogmatic and prescriptive, for it can affect no mediation between conflicts of the present and the ideals in light of which it proposes to judge the present. Without the anticipatory interpretive dimension, critical theory would be indistinguishable from diagnosis serving crisis management.

The counterfactual ideal of "consensual need articulations" serves a double purpose: on the one hand, through this counterfactual, Habermas claims to complete the normative logic of universalistic ethics in the modern tradition by replacing the monologic procedure of universalizability through a dialogic one of communication; on the other hand, through this counterfactual Habermas claims to transcend such ethics by allowing the thematization and discussion of needs and their interpretations, which most variants of universalistic ethics consider to be mere "pieces of inner nature."[46]

In allowing needs and their interpretations to become subject matters of moral discourse, communicative ethics provides a model of moral reasoning that corresponds to the socialization level of post-conventional personality types.[47] But by insisting on viewing communicative ethics along the model of an evolutionary logic leading from natural right theories to Kantian universalism and to Rawlsian proceduralism, Habermas has underplayed what is really new in this conception. The new and radical element in communicative ethics is precisely the assumption that needs and their interpretations belong to the center of moral discourse. In this respect, communicative ethics is more in the tradition of ethical naturalism than of formal universalism. Needs and their interpretations are constitutive of self-identity and define ideals of the good life and happiness. A need interpretation and the corresponding social norm become problematic, precisely when prevailing modes of interaction and prevailing conceptions of happiness and the good life prove inadquate and instead lead to unhappiness, misery, lack of orientation and identification. Such need interpretations and social norms, which cause present misery, unhappiness and disorientation, cannot be thematized through discourse alone. They can only be called into question in praxis — in activities aiming at the transformation of our material conditions of existence. Need interpretations that are constitutive of self-identity cannot be abandoned without a corresponding alteration of modes of conduct, patterns of interaction, and modes of self-understanding. Reaching a "consensual need articulation" entails a process of practical-formative activity that transcends the boundaries of formal discourses. Needs and their interpretations are not only the subject matter but also the driving force of those activities that the young Marx had characterized as the practico-critical activity of self-transformation of our conditions of existence.

Two consequences follow from this line of thought: first, it cannot be the therapeutic situation or psychoanalytical discourse, as Habermas sometimes

46. Habermas, "Moral Development and Ego-Identity," in *Communication and the Evolution of Society, op.cit.*, p. 90.

47. *Ibid.*, p. 83, schema 3.

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argues,[48] but social movements that can fulfill the demands of an ethics aiming at the critique and new articulations of needs. Second, communicative ethics can transcend traditional universalistic ethics and can guide the normative aspirations of present protest movements insofar as it sees itself as articulating not merely ideals of communication but those of practical-critical activity.

A similar consideration applies to the counterfactual criterion of "discursive will formation on generalizable interests." This was formulated in part as an answer to the increased legitimation demands that were diagnosed to accompany social rationalization processes. The discourse theory emphatically rejects the authoritarian and conservative justifications of legitimation. Once the authority of tradition has been undermined, intersubjectively binding criteria of institutional arrangements can only be reestablished through further argumentation and reasoning. This at least is the rational kernel of this ideal, and one which we ought to hold onto in the face of the growing appeal to tradition today. Having said this, one has not yet said enough: this counterfactual formulates a meta-theoretical criterion about acceptable levels of normative argumentation, but is incoherent as a procedure by means of which to generate specific institutional perspectives of democratic legitimacy. This institutional deficit of the theory of discourse has often been pointed out and needs no repetition here.[49] What is more problematic is the unquestioned assumption that the domain of the political is constituted by the "general interest." This assumption avoids the real difficulties faced by democratic theory since Rousseau: how and by whom this general interest can be recognized and articulated? In recent discussions that address the legitimation problems of the modern state, a conservative and a radical variant of this critique of the general interest can be seen. While the conservative critique aims at the *privatization* of the general and of the collective sphere by revitalizing particularistic interests in society and by curbing the extension of the state apparatus,[50] the radical critique aims at the *socialization* of the general interest, by reversing the monopoly of political action and discourse that the state has claimed over the articulation of the political. Touraine, for example, formulates the task of the new politics to be the strengthening of society *vis-à-vis* the state through effective decentralization, and the creation of new and multiple public spaces, in which not only a transfer of discourse but a transfer of power and decision-making from the state apparatus to the new collectivities is to be effected.[51] The experience of the last few years, since the emergence of the new

48. Jürgen Habermas, "Wahrheitstheorien," in H. Fahrenbach, ed., *Wirklichkeit und Reflexion* (Pfüllingen, 1973), p. 260.

49. Niklas Luhmann, "Systemtheoretische Argumentationen: Eine Entgegnung auf Jürgen Habermas," in Luhmann and Habermas, *Theorie der Gesellschaft oder Sozialtechnologie* (Frankfurt, 1971), pp. 291-398. This is also the only valid point in Spaemann's "Die Utopie der Herrschaftsfreiheit," in M. Riedel, ed., *Die Rehabilitierung der praktischen Philosophie*, Vol. I (Freiburg, 1974).

50. For a good account, see Peter Steinfells, *The New Conservatives* (New Yrok, 1977).

51. Alain Touraine, *L'Apres Socialisme* (Paris, 1980), pp. 259ff.

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conservatism, has shown how effectively this demand for the socialization of the state can be co-opted by the demand for its privatization. By implicitly assuming that political discourse still moves within the 18th-century formulations of democratic theory, we avoid the issue of the constitution and articulation of politics today. The task of developing a conception of democracy such as to accommodate the demands for a socialization of the state raised by citizens' democracy movements has not yet begun.

Yet there is a deeper reason leading critical theory in its present form into meta-theoretical normative agnosticism. This is the enlightenment model of the relation of theory and practice. Since *Strukturwandel der Oeffentlichkeit*, Habermas has discussed politics not as political praxis, but in terms of an enlightened public whose praxis consisted in critical reasoning. The fulfillment of the cultural legacy of modernity is still understood today in terms of the dialogic give and take between a "culture of experts" and lay persons.[52] But political praxis entails much more: it entails the transformation of the prevalent cognitive meanings, images, norms and sensibilities from the standpoint of collective groups struggling for emancipation. It entails developing new modes of interaction, experience and cognition, new forms of life and experimental institutional structures that prefigure the society of the future. As the women's movement insists, oppressed groups have no history until they begin to write it themselves.

In this process, the truths of science and philosophy, the sensibilities of the aesthetic, and the norms of morality are reappropriated from the standpoint of the emancipatory demands of the present. Precisely within the horizon of the life world the meaning of established truth, beauty and justice have to be transformed so as to allow new modes of self-understanding, sensibility and dignity to emerge. This *critical hermeneutic* of meaning complexes that emancipatory groups have to establish for themselves has little do to with the Church of which Weber warned. The Church is in this context no more than a metaphor for the claim that a non-regressive and rational reconciliation of the value spheres split up in modernity is no longer possible. It is not in the name of a totalizing world view that emancipatory movements today criticize the legacy of modernity — although such tendencies are present — but it is with the hope of letting the past generate meanings that can show the way to overcome the present for the future. Such efforts to extract the meaning that the past hides until we force it to speak must challenge the institutional self-understanding of science, art and morality. Such institutionally frozen images of domination, conceptions of the good life, and visions of the "other" must be criticized in the name of one's dignity and worth as a political-moral subject and for the sake of the recognition of the positive moments in one's otherness.

Today both the women's and the ecology movements are challenging the cultural legacy of modernity in the name of new ideals of autonomy and individuation in a non-patriarchal society and for the creation of new institutional structures in which the industrial exploitation of nature can be

52. Habermas, "Die Moderne," *op.cit.*, p. 23.

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overcome. It is not clear why a new socialization of the individual beyond the patriarchal family, school and culture, and a new mode of material interaction with nature, beyond the industrial mode of production, would ble impossible. No theory can define the limits of future possibility, although it can enlighten us about it. For this possibility is posterior and not prior to actuality — as Aristotle long ago said of praxis.

The resolution of the aporias of critical theory seems to lie in the direction of developing a conception of emancipatory politics in the present that would combine the perspective of radical democratic legitimacy in the organization of institutional life with that of a cultural-moral critique of patriarchy and the industrial exploitation of the nature within and without us. The ideals of radical democratic legitimacy and utopian *Kulturkritik* have been the polarities within which critical theory has hitherto sought to overcome modernity and its discontents. That they cannot be reunited such as to integrate a crisis theory of the present with the anticipatory critique of present life forms from the standpoint of a utopian future is not obvious. Critical theory redeems past hope in the name of the future by revealing the as yet unrealized potentials of the present.[53]

53. This text was written before I had a chance to read Jürgen Habermas, "The Dialectic of Rationalization," in this issue of *Telos*.

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THE EFFECTIVE POWER OF ART: ON BENJAMIN'S AESTHETICS*

by Sandor Radnoti

Reception and Aura in Immanent Aesthetics

In Benjamin's conception, transformations in the reception of art are intrinsic elements in the process of artistic formation. "The essence of these transformations is that the commodity form in the work of art and the mass form in its audience surface with unprecedented vehemence and immediacy."[1] He illuminates this process through an analogy: "The significance of the consumer's taste increases to the same extent that his expertise decreases."[2] One may add that, as man's ability to see his "cause" in art diminishes, pure taste correspondingly becomes the sole and uncertain navigator of his reception of art. Benjamin accurately perceives that this process, which begins outside the work of art, comes to penetrate the work itself in art for art's sake. "This is the first time that taste achieves hegemony in poetics.... The poet, for the first, time, faces words as the buyer faces commodities on the open market."[3] In his analysis of Baudelaire, Benjamin clearly demonstrates an important feature of modern art which Habermas later aptly formulates: "The laws of the market have already penetrated the substance of works of art and have become just as immanent for them as the laws of form."[4]

I can only sketch in passing the relevant references in Benjamin's rich and extensive material on Baudelaire. "Baudelaire's behavior on the literary market: he, who had a deep knowledge of the nature of the commodity, was able or compelled to acknowledge the market as an objective instance.... Perhaps Baudelaire was the first to have a conception of a marketing trade-mark." "The bourgeois prepares to withdraw his mandate from the poet. What kind of social mandate can take its place? Baudelaire was not in a position to raise the question of mandate with any particular social class; the reply could best be deduced from the market and its crises."[5]

In particular, the favorable conditions for the reception of lyrical verse were gone. The value of the lyricist *as such,* the importance of the "minstrel," had been dissolved. After Baudelaire, the lyrical poem has no further public

*This is Chapter V, Parts 3, 4, and 5, of an unpublished book, titled in Hungarian *Krédo és Rezignacio*. Translated by John Fekete.

1. From *Zentralpark*. Translated from the Hungarian.
2. From *Paris of the Second Empire in Baudelaire*. Translated from the Hungarian.
3. *Ibid.*
4. Jürgen Habermas, *Transformations in the Structure of the Public Sphere* Translated from the Hungarian (Gondolat, 1971), p. 273.
5. From *Zentralpark*. Translated from the Hungarian.

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success, and the reader becomes impatient even with lyrics that had been previously accepted. Under these circumstances, explains Benjamin, Baudelaire builds on a reluctant stratum of readers. "Will power and the ability to concentrate are not their strong points; what they prefer is sensual pleasures; they are familiar with the 'spleen' which kills interest and receptiveness."[6] The mass forms are built into the lyric in tandem with the commodity forms. "This crowd, of whose existence Baudelaire is always aware, has not served as the model for any of his works, but it is imprinted on his creativity as a hidden figure."[7]

The citations above serve as signposts to a fruitful standpoint in art interpretation which Benjamin here initiates. How are changes in reception built into immanent principles of form? There is a world of difference between this question and the question of how the same thing is *reflected* in the work of art. This latter question inevitably shatters the unity of the work in order to select from the fragments those which display social adequacy, without any subjective frills or irrelevancies and with sufficient universality to be sharp and convincing. In this conception, art is a fellow traveler that holds a mirror up to the world, and is not itself the world, i.e., is not an autonomous and integral part of social life. In Benjamin, by contrast, "the crisis of artistic reproduction...can be seen as an integral part of a crisis in perception itself."[8] This has to do with the root of the crisis, the collapse of communal forms, the development of non-communal bourgeois society, the destruction of traditions, the impoverishment of experiences, and the central part of Benjamin's theory where this is discussed.[9] In this crisis, art becomes problematic and Benjamin describes it in terms of the perishing of *aura*, i.e., the characteristic experience of art, from the human viewpoint.

Benjamin approaches the concept of aura from a variety of directions, and there is no doubt that the aura in the "Mechanical Reproduction" essay and the aura in the essay "On Some Motifs in Baudelaire" are not identical. The substantive concretizations fall victim to Benjamin's most obvious fault as a thinker: a romantic overstraining of a correct line of thought. The substantive descriptions, e.g., where the cultic and the auratic are confounded, are connected to the final problems of Benjamin's aesthetic thought. For the moment, however, what is important is the basic idea: the methodological principle of the aura itself. Indeed, this is simultaneously a

6. "On Some Motifs in Baudelaire," *Illuminations,* ed. Hannah Arendt, trans. Harry Zohn (New York, 1968), p. 157.

7. *Ibid.,* p. 167.

8. *Ibid.,* p. 189. Benjamin was not unaffected by the problematical base-superstructure dualism, but he always stopped short of seeing the superstructure as mechanical reflection. Instead, he writes of the superstructure as the "expression" of the base. Cited in Rolf Tiedemann, *Studien zur Philosophie Benjamins* (Europaische Verlagsanstalt, 1965), p. 106. His study of Paris clearly demonstrates that this conception, too, employed in the theory of dialectical images, is judged to be just as inapplicable to concrete historical analysis as to the analysis of *autonomous* art.

9. Cf. "The Dialectic of Inactivity," the untranslated Chapter IV of Radnoti's *Krédo és Rezignacio.*

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category of art and of its reception. It is both an experience characteristic of the reception of a work of art, and a unity, an atmosphere, that radiates from the work to the recipient: a reciprocal human gaze, as Benjamin poetically formulates it.[10]

The methodological significance of the category is that the work and its reception here do not presuppose each other as independent complements, but rather the very existence of the category relies on their interdependence. Only a work that has an *effect* can have an aura, and the aura presupposes a specifically aesthetic behavior in the recipient. In other words, Benjamin does not exaggerate when he attributes practical significance in art to aura on account of its function of drawing the work of art and the recipient into the same circle.[11]

There is a general difficulty, however, which Benjamin does not indicate, in concretizing the content of the aura. This is a decisive, objective characteristic of human aesthetic behavior but — precisely for that reason — essentially subjective. Aesthetic behavior takes in a much broader realm than art; for example, landscape can have an aura as well.[12] At the same time, it does not necessarily provide orientation in the realm of art. For Benjamin, the loss of the aura parallels the loss of community; indeed, it is in the mode of reception of closed communities that the most homogeneous aura may be expected. In effect, the process of the "loss" of the aura is not the termination of the aura but rather its particularization. These few sentences sketch the problematic of aura. Benjamin is right, at the same time, that without the aura works of art cannot exist or function.

The methodological principle of the aura refers to the basic problem: how can the antinomy of the normative standpoint and the historical standpoint of art be surpassed? The introduction of the reception problem deepens both standpoints but does not put an end to the contradiction. Benjamin has given two different answers to this question. First, his study of Goethe's *Elective Affinities* focuses on the individual work of art itself, which, through its form, embraces and homogenizes both value and historical testimony. Secondly, *The Origin of German Tragic Drama* offers another solution by attributing deep historical meaning to formal ideals existing independently of individual works of art. This later solution encircled a broad range of artistic creation, including problematic art, but the category guaranteed its application to what was still *artistic* creation. The dual solution is still evident in Benjamin's late period but (especially with regard to the second approach) with substantial modification.

10. "On Some Motifs in Baudelaire," *op.cit.*, p. 190.

11. He develops this thought in a deeply problematic context. Since this is not the place to argue with him, consider the following in a footnote: "If we designate as aura the associations which, at home in the *mémoire involontaire*, tend to cluster around the object of a perception, then its analogue in the case of a utilitarian object is the experience which has left traces of the practiced hand." *Ibid.*, p. 188.

12. Benjamin himself writes of the aura of a mountain or a branch. Cf. "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechnical Reproduction," in *Illuminations, op.cit.*, pp. 224-225.

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The first resolution cannot be described in any sense as "scientific." Form, as a characteristic of a work, cannot be derived from specific artistic achievements, but has to be accepted *post festum* as a self-evident given for the analysis. It is impossible to prove that a work is formed. (This position does not mean that it is impossible to convince anyone of the significance of a work of art. In this regard, however, the interpretation can only aim to correct reception and to have it reoccur with the attention directed to new or opaque relations. Nonetheless, reception — and this cannot be overemphasized — is ultimately subjective. Indeed, interpretation itself is subjective and, from this viewpoint, no more than *one* objectified reception.) The last decade of Benjamin's work is essentially taken up with interpreting Baudelaire, but it is the point of departure of his work (not its conclusion) that he is dealing with a masterpiece. Such critical starting points of aesthetic theory can never be dispensed with; only, at most, denied.

Form is both condition of existence and *norm* of art. "In the artwork the formal law is central," according to one of the aphorisms in Benjamin's "Thirteen Theses Against Snobs." Another aphorism clarifies the *historicity* intrinsic in art. "In the artwork, content [*Inhalt*] and form are one: meaning [*Gehalt*]."[13] The task of interpretation is the analysis of the historical content objectified in the work of art — in the early Lukacs' language, its "worldview." If we begin with the work as a totality, then historicity and form, the character of the work as determined by history and its character as transcending history, are absorbed in each other. Every work of art annihilates the antinomy of art.

We have reached a strictly work-centered position, concerned only with "form magically conjured into the world." How can we get from this rarefied region to the airy spaces of effective power and reception? But why should that path lie only outside the work? To begin with, as Benjamin's work has amply demonstrated, reception and effective power constitute the formative principle of art. Secondly, the method of taking the work as the starting point is itself an instance of reception; it should carry an awareness of this self-consciously, also of the fact that judgment is cut to the measure of history and involutarily subjective. At the same time, an aesthetic conception which thus highlights reception and effective power, precisely because it inquires into the *function* of the work, to a certain extent suspends its closure. The work, as a self-enclosed form, naturally remains untouchable, but as a formation that functions in the world, it is in constant motion with regard to its effect and its meaning.

In his study of Fuchs, Benjamin (now using Engels as an authority and with a polemical edge against the history of ideas) revives the thinking of his youth about the problematic character of art history and about the fundamental significance of the effect of the work of art. With reference to a letter from

13. "One-Way Street," in *One-Way Street and Other Writings*, trans. Edmund Jephcott and Kingsley Shorter (London, 1979), p. 66.

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Friedrich Engels to Franz Mehring, dated July 14, 1893, he writes: "Engels' objection is two-fold: first, he is protesting against the habit in the history of ideas of representing a new dogma as the *development* of an earlier one, a new school of poetry as a *reaction* to a preceding one, a new style as the *overcoming* of an older one; second, it is clear that he also implicitly objects to the custom of representing such new entities in isolation from their effect on people and their intellectual and economic processes of production. His argument destroys the claim of the humanities to be the history of constitutions or natural sciences, of religion or art.... It calls in question the hermetic self-sufficiency of the various disciplines and their subjects — in the case of art, the works which the concept of art purports to encompass. For a dialectical historian, these works incorporate both their prehistory and their after-history — an after-history in virtue of which their pre-history, too, can be seen to undergo constant change. They teach him how their function can outlast their creator, can leave his intentions behind; how its reception by the artist's contemporaries forms part of the effect that the work of art has on us ourselves today, and how this effect derives from our encounter not just with the work, but with the history that has brought the work down to us."[14] The historical perspective confronts contemplative historicism and comes to understand the relation of work and history from the history that is unpacked from the work itself. "The historical materialist must sacrifice the epic dimension of history. The past for him becomes the subject of a construction whose locus is not empty time, but the particular epoch, the particular life, the particular work. He breaks the epoch away from its reified *historical continuity*, and the life from the epoch, and the work from the life's work. But the result of his construction is that *in* the works the life's work, *in* the life's work the epoch, and *in* the epoch the course of history are suspended and preserved."[15]

The attentive reader will perceive at once the connection of this line of thought with the conception of pre-history and after-history in *The Origin of German Tragic Drama,* i.e., with its concept of origin. There is no doubt that the *redemptive* role of interpretation is preserved as well. Benjamin interprets the historical process consistently on behalf of the present and starting from its needs. He overextends this correct line of thought, however, when, from fear of the false ideology of infinite historical progress, he dissolves *any* possible historical continuum. Historical testimony is then merely the historical testimony of this moment of now-time, of the moment of reception. The past is mediated to the present by interpretation; the present is mediated to the future by messianism.

To conceive the opposition between Benjamin's study of *Elective Affinities* and *The Origin of German Tragic Drama* as an opposition between a work-centered aesthetics and a non-work-centered aesthetics is superficial. It is true

14. "Edward Fuchs, Collector and Historian," *One-Way Street, op.cit.*, pp. 350-351.
15. *Ibid.*, p. 352. Cf. "Theses on the Philosophy of History," No. XVII, in *Illuminations, op.cit.*, pp. 264-265.

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that an aesthetics organized around the laws of artistic form (and not least, the formative character of effective power) stands in opposition to a historical philosophy of form. In this latter conception, form is seen to be realized in works that are not necessarily significant, and hence form is to a certain extent independent of works of art, although naturally it can only be analyzed in works of art and can only be demonstrated by way of their interpretation. Behind this opposition, it is not difficult to notice two philosophical standpoints. In his later thinking, Benjamin blends a great deal from both of these into his final — if antinomically interpreted — problem complex in the philosophy of history. The past and future of communities, reaching into this day, and the present of the world of commodities, become the measure of all things. The immanent or non-immanent character of works of art, which remain as two unresolved viewpoints side by side in Benjamin's later work, are not dichotomized there in the same way as they were in the two works of his youth.

Although these aspects of the early resolutions which sparked the contradition still tempt him, they are not decisive (e.g., the identification of the aura and the beautiful, which would unquestionably reduce art to pure nostalgia).[16] The question is rather whether it is possible, in the 19th and 20th century period of crisis in art, for the idea of form to exist independently of significant works and yet at the same time to be realized in distorted, problematic works (in the sense in which, during the 17th century, allegory or tragedy existed as artistically problematical yet immanent principles of form)?

One must distinguish between allegory and allegorization. Baroque allegory, standing at a crossroads, displays dual behavior: a new desperate content is mixed with the traditional forms of life and thought. The form remains intact, but the internal contradiction of form and content makes the works of art problematic. (It is precisely because this contradiction gets established that we can speak of form and content separately.) For the modern artist, there is no such tradition of form. "The allegorical perspective, which was still stylistically fruitful in the 17th century, is no longer so in the 19th."[17]

Modern consumer culture increasingly takes the place of art and extracts in large volume from the realm of art precisely those works which are artistically problematic, uncertain, lacking resolution, and hence, on account of their inner substance, capable of less resistance. Where works serve exclusively consumption purposes, one can speak *only* of technique, not form: of one communicative technique of the achieved commodity producing society. This conceptual distinction, however, is made more difficult by the fact that the *contemporary* reception of genuine works of art is likewise directly influenced by technique determined by the objective content of the work.

The point here is that the threat of consumer culture itself becomes a

16. "On Some Motifs in Baudelaire," *op.cit.*, pp. 184, 189, 201.
17. From *Zentralpark*. Translated from the Hungarian.

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principle of form in modern art, not only in great works like Baudelaire's, but also in works "which are well on the way to appearing as commodities on the market, but yet waver on the threshold."[18] Benjamin's second important area of research is the examination of these types of works and stylistic currents, e.g., interior decorating, or Art Nouveau. He once described his passionate interest, which he shared with Brecht, in the foot soldiers of art: culture "owes its existence not just to the efforts of the great geniuses who fashioned it, but also in greater or lesser degree to the anonymous drudgery of their contemporaries."[19] This interest dovetails with the accurate perception in *The Origin of German Tragic Drama* that not only the successes of form but also its breakdowns and shipwrecks may have serious historical meaning. It is important to recognize, however, that here too it is a question of the *analysis of form*. Only the analysis of form can resolve the dilemma of making sense of art.

This is a reconstruction of Benjamin's *immanent* aesthetics. It has been a reconstruction because there is also a parallel non-immanent aesthetics whose elements are at times mixed with the other. That this immanent conception is justified and that Benjamin never made this duality conscious in his writings can be verified through those internal problems of his immanent aesthetic conception, which explains why he opened out in another direction as well. In principle, this aesthetics may respond to two related general questions:

A. *Reception and the Historical Character of Art*. It can show the historical testimony of art, interpreting what lies concealed: the historical subject and the mode of perception of an epoch or a situation. The infiltration of reception and of the *sensus communis* of its origin into the formal principle of a work expands the horizons of this testimonial factor. According to Lukacs' late aesthetics, art works out the possibilities of human species development, and "the truth of art is the truth of the self-consciousness of the human species."[20] The reception of art is an activity that comprises the appropriation of this self-consciousness, the recognition proper to this self-consciousness. Obviously, if we posit the expression and the appropriation of species self-consciousness on two rigidly different planes, then "humanity," the species dimension, will always be suspended over people's heads, momentarily accessible through a healthy leap, and then again slipping away. In that case, art is *no more than* a utopian suggestion, with precious little bearing on real life. The two planes — the work and its effective power — reciprocally rigidify and, if we think about it, this segregation nourishes, on one side, a supercilious elitist conception of art and, on the other, the base demagoguery of the criterion of success.

From the aesthetic viewpoint, by contrast, it is a question of a homogenizing unity: the possibility of the work's long- or short-term effective power belongs among its most essential formal intentions. It must be

18. From *Paris, Capital of the 19th Century*. Translated from the Hungarian.
19. "Edward Fuchs," *op.cit.*, p. 359.
20. György Lukacs, *Az esztétikum sajatossaga*, Vol. II (Budapest, 1965), p. 629.

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emphasized that the aesthetic viewpoint is not merely one possible viewpoint with regard to the work, but the sole view of the work of art as a work of art. It does not follow from this, of course, that the work as a social phenomenon should not permit numerous other modes of access.[21]

The fact that the mass production of pseudo-art was developed to satisfy these non-aesthetic needs of reception, and, conversely, that this mass production in turn varied and augmented them, does not mean that art itself has been freed from the burden of such non-aesthetic needs. Indeed, in a certain sense, they constantly modify aesthetic reception. The great art of Hogarth and Defoe, emerging from trashy entertainment, belong among the most direct (and hence, naturally, not generalizable) examples. The closer we get to our own time, the rarer become such examples where *immediate* needs of reception turn into principles of form. Nonetheless, it is in principle impossible that the given reception should fail to turn into a formal principle in some fashion, if only as negativity. Moreover, some portion of those needs of reception that are not in themselves (fully) artistic in character may naturally dissolve into artistic reception and exist as an element equally of the work as entertainment and as ethical tribunal.

The sociology of art, however, pursues an explicitly non-aesthetic reception of art when it lifts cognitions out of a work or when it examines people's reactions independently of the work. It may arrive at useful results, but it would be a mistake to believe that there exist separately, as complements, the work as an aesthetic phenomenon (with its own autonomous law, independent of external factors) and the work as sociological phenomenon (with the mission of clarifying the social influences on the work and the work's own social impact). The autonomous law of the work embraces these later viewpoints: it takes in not only the work's own pre-history but, to a certain extent, its after-history as well, just as, in a certain measure, it is the after-life of a work which decodes or reinterprets its form. The historical testimony in the work of art thus conceived is then not pure data or aggregation of fact but truly — and secretively — encloses history within it. Its authentic character as testimony has its source not only in its universality but, paradoxically, in its indeterminacy. It is never possible to translate with precision the testimony factor in a work, but only to approximate it and to portray its intention.

B. *Reception and the Normative Character of Art.* This factor of historical testimony unravels from the historical side the historical non-historicity of art but in such a way as to preserve intact the unity of art, and to prevent the fragmentation of art interpretation into two distinct branches. In other words, the non-historical, normative character of art turns out to be a

21. We have only to consider those types of reception that could evidently not be termed cathexical aesthetic reception. There are those who take in the purely intellectual content of art (art as cognition); those whose appreciation of art degenerates into particular enjoyment, mere entertainment; those who have a strictly voluntaristic relation to art (on a broad scale, from using art for arousal at concerts to the social status symbol of taking part in a vernissage); and those who animate the characters (here, only literature, film, and perhaps the fine arts come into play), identify themselves or others with them, and dissolve the boundaries between art and life.

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condition of the historical response. The second general question approaches art from this normative side, but also clearly embraces the work's historical character. "What is the funciton of art in human life?" is the question or, identically, "what is the root of the need for art, what is the meaning of this need?" The constitution of the theory of this need and function is the great prospective task of aesthetics. The various types of aesthetics developed to date, surprisingly enough, are least accomplished in this regard. Benjamin himself, whose entire aesthetic thought advances toward this problem at every point and who accomplishes some of the most essential preparatory work with his concept of reception, arrives at unacceptable solutions.

There is a serious uncertainty about this question in Benjamin's aesthetic thought. The increasingly unfavorable conditions for artistic reception give rise to a vision of the death of art. More than once he is overcome by resignation, in terms of which the still available works of art can only look backward, to a lost beauty. In the *Elective Affinities* study, this was also the price of the immanence of art. Now, a second function, memory, takes its place alongside beauty. To gain access to beauty, art must descend to the womb of time, to the traces of an organic, closed community. In this context, Goethe's marvelous lines, "Oh, you were in time gone by my sister or my wife," already appear to be the alpha and omega of art.[22] But his resigned attribution of a repressive quality to art in turn awakens Benjamin's distrust. His own observations, which showed the deep interrelation between immanent art and the given *sensus communis*, are turned upside down: art itself becomes at times suspect, its immanence appears hermetic — pure judgment — lacking practical effect or usefulness.

Once again, in the history of ideologies, the notion of the end of the artistic epoch has been placed on the agenda. The false distinction which degrades art, in the Baudelaire study, to the effect that the objects of art are "objects of perception" as opposed to "utilitarian objects," [23] is inverted and art is dissolved in order that its objects may become "of use." The recurring suspicion of the end of art is all the more interesting in that Benjamin himself supplies weighty arguments against it. When he points out how decisive a factor is the experience of shock within modern artistic currents, he discovers a category which is again simultaneously a category of the work and of its reception, but which does not necessarily announce the form of the work, only its technique. But when he points out, in the case of Baudelaire, that shock is itself a component of aura, indeed, a means to the creation of aura, then he points to infinite possibilities in the generation of artistic form. In these terms, the notion of the death of art belongs to a tragic critique of culture, not to the conceptual framework of aesthetics.

Indeed, art shows its infinite power by continuously assimilating the non-artistic. Benjamin illustrates this by way of a paradox: "Baudelaire's

22. "On Some Motifs in Baudelaire," *op.cit.*, p. 189.
23. *Ibid.*, p. 188.

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undertaking was to reproduce the specific aura characteristic of the commodity." [24] The object of Baudelaire's art became the loss of aura itself. It is at all times a possibility of art that it be "enigmatically perfect" (*rätselhaft vollendete* — to use Benjamin's words about Keller).[25] Referring to Baudelaire and to Benjamin's interpretation, Adorno conceives the situation this way: "The tendency for art to become non-artistic appears not only as a stage of the destruction of art but also as a tendency of its evolution." [26] The world of art is always in motion: ground gained is abandoned only to press ahead to other ground. Each new age and situation must re-concretize what is art.[27]

Secondly, consider an intuition in *The Parisian Arcades,* according to which every true work of art contains parts that "are touched by the cool wind of a rising dawn. In consequence, art, often judged to be an enemy of all progress, may indeed serve to provide an authentic definition of this progress. It is not in the continuity of the passage of time that progress is at home but in its discontinuities; in other words, where something truly new makes itself manifest (with all the common sense of the untimely)." [28] Those dimensions of this conception which bear on philosophy of history echo throughout the *Theses on the Philosophy of History,* but unfortunately its aesthetic contents remain unexposed. Yet, the possibility of this counter-argument flashes faintly in even the Janus-faced character of works that waver on the threshold of becoming commodities. According to Benjamin, traces can be found there as well of a utopian dream that transcends the bourgeois world.

Of course, as Benjamin recognizes, the immediate function of this dream is to mask the antinomies of the bourgeois world. It is equally certain, however, that these (still artistic) attempts — which Benjamin calls phantasmagorias — conceal a type of illusion which (helplessly, perhaps, and in a mystifying rather than demystifying manner) declines to embrace the bourgeois world in all its consequences, and which preserves this characteristic right up to the point where such works of art are reproduced as articles of consumption and transformed into means of manipulation. (Art Nouveau, for example, falls into this category.) Even in this morass, the artistic need makes its appearance. Even in the case of so consistent and bitter an illustrator of the *Endgame* of the human world as Samuel Beckett, this need does not vanish from the theater which evokes our failing species, but hovers there in the form of the invention and narration of a story. This need alone makes it possible for Hamm, the protagonist of *Endgame,* to raise the sole — hesitant — question

24. From *Zentralpark.* Translated from the Hungarian. Cf. "On Some Motifs in Baudelaire," *op.cit.,* p. 194.

25. "Gottfried Keller," in *Schriften,* vol. II (Frankfurt, 1955), p. 287.

26. Theodor W. Adorno, *Aesthetische Theorie* (Frankfurt, 1970), p. 123.

27. In our period, it may be certain products of photography that turn into art create an aura around themselves, or rather, suddenly become auratic. If this is so, a most instructive realm is opened for aesthetic examination because here, in dilettantish photography (dilettantish in the artistic sense as well), in a manner that is totally unusual nowadays in other media, explicit commodity production and art co-exist.

28. Cited in *Schriften,* Vol. II, *op.cit.,* pp. 103ff.

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worthy of the human race: "We're not beginning to...to...mean something?... To think perhaps it won't all have been for nothing!"[29]

The reason for Benjamin's periodic mistrust of art is that he fails to draw the consequences from his intuitions: the artistic need, as such, is a *radical need*. And paradoxical as it may be, its immediate practical uselessness only reinforces this radical tendency. In the course of the active aesthetic reception of every genuine work of art, in some fashion we always encounter the cause of the human species, i.e., freedom, which may be lost to some specifically given realm of life but still remains at work in the autonomous laws of the formed work.

Because he remains unaware of this, Benjamin vacillates bewteen an immanent aesthetics and perspectives on art that pass beyond it to other practical realms. It is certainly possible, with justice, to highlight the "phantasmagoric" distortion of life, and Benjamin repeatedly accomplishes this in his exposition of the interweaving of commodity and interiority.[30] An instructive point of contact arises here with Brecht's view on the matter of the psychologization of terror and pity, where Brecht, likewise, struggles against the falsehood of bourgeois "aura" by exploding the aura. (Indeed, the bourgeois world which, in the private sphere, produces art, morality, and sensibility right up to the world war is, in effect, the background for the explosion of the entire avant-garde.) While it is possible, of course, to create a new man and a new art through the shattering of the aura, it is also possible to destroy art. Benjamin has a clear view of the difference between these alternatives, and of the norms of art, even if, in some of his writings, he reflects on the situation *after* the death of art. To clarify the contrast, let me cite in its entirety, from *One Way Street*, which appeared in 1928, the "Thirteen Theses Against Snobs" — a rather surprising little piece from someone who later came to respect the didactic Brechtian documentary drama and the Brechtian perspective on art:

I. The artist makes a work.	The primitive expresses himself in documents.
II. The artwork is only a document.	No document is as such a work of art.
III. The artwork is a masterpiece.	The document serves to instruct.
IV. On artworks, artists learn their craft.	Before documents, a public is educated.
V. Artworks are remote from each other in their perfection.	All documents communicate through their subject matter.
VI. In the artwork content and form are one: meaning.	In documents, the subject matter is dominant.

29. Samuel Beckett, *Endgame*, translated by the author (New York, 1958), pp. 32-33. Cf. *Fin de partie* (Paris, 1965), pp. 49-50.

30. Cf., e.g., "Traumkitsch," in *Schriften*, Vol. I (Frankfurt, 1955), pp. 423ff; "Erfahrung und Armut," *ibid.*, Vol. II, pp. 6ff; etc.

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VII. Meaning is the outcome of experience.	Subject matter is the outcome of dreams.
VIII. In the artwork, subject matter is a ballast jettisoned during contemplation.	The more one loses oneself in a document, the denser the subject matter grows.
IX. In the artwork the formal law is central.	Forms are merely dispersed in documents.
X. The artwork is synthetic: an energy center.	The fertility of the document demands: analysis.
XI. The impact of an artwork increases with viewing.	A document overpowers only through surprise.
XII. The virility of works lies in assault.	The document's innocence gives it cover.
XIII. The artist sets out to conquer meanings.	The primitive man barricades himself behind subject matter.[31]

Form, Technique and the Function of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction

The theoretical solution — reception as a principle of form — does not put an end to the estrangement of modern reception from art. The fact remains that a large part of those needs which once were satisfied with art or artistic dilettantism are today satisfied with consumer productions of manipulated pseudo-art. This substitutability, which has kept the question of the function of art unanswered to this day, also makes immeasurably more difficult the aesthetic *examination* of reception. Both Benjamin's best known study, "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction," and Adorno's fine piece from the same period, "On the Fetish Character in Music and the Regression of Listening," demonstrate these difficulties. Both essays are perfectly clear about the fact that reception is an organic constituent, not only of the sociological fate of the work of art, but also of its aesthetic essence. The contrast between the two writers, therefore, is characteristic. Adorno's critical letters to Benjamin document the divergence in philosophy of history that stands in the background of the debate. Benjamin himself commented on the relation between the two studies by noting that he highlights the positive moments, Adorno, the negative.[32]

"The categories of autonomously oriented art have no applicability to the contemporary reception of music." "The consciousness of the mass of listeners is adequate to fetishized music." "It is contemporary listening which has regressed, arrested at the infantile stage. Not only do the listening subjects lose, along with freedom of choice and responsibility, the capacity for conscious perception of music, which was from time immemorial confined to

31. *One-Way Street, op.cit.*, p. 66.
32. See Benjamin's letter to Adorno, Dec. 9, 1938, in *Briefe,* Vol. II (Frankfurt, 1966), p. 798.

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a narrow group, but they stubbornly reject the possibility of such perception." [33] Adorno points out the structure of regressive listening and fetishized music: the mutually complementary depravity and magical power; the disintegrating role performed in the musical totality by arrangements, coloring, and melodic whims, and inattentive listening, an accommodation to the apperception of music as background (employing here an idea Benjamin raised in connection with film). No paths lead from the given reception to the artistic reception of genuine art; the effective aesthetic function of music has completely ground to a halt. Those who wish to preserve the value of music necessarily attempt, for the sake of drawing distinctions to oppose to contemporary reception, to impose an ideal of purity and to canonize the work and its enjoyment to such an extent as to produce a fetishism just as harmful as consumerism. The rebellion against fetishism only implicates people more deeply in fetishism. "Whenever they attempt to break away from the passive status of compulsory consumers and 'activate' themselves, they succumb to pseudoactivity." [34]

A less profound aesthetician would of necessity infer from these premises a complete break between the work of art and its reception. Adorno, however, employing a necessarily problematic transition, returns to the internal connection between the artwork and reception when he talks of the autonomous works of art of the period. He points to a model: "Such music really crystallizes the whole, into which it has incorporated the vulgarized fragments, into something new, yet it takes its material from regressive listening. Indeed, one can almost think that in Mahler's music this experience was seismographically recorded forty years before it permeated society." Or a second model of music, which regards the first as its forerunner: "It proposes to consciously resist the phenomenon of regressive listening." Adorno is talking about the music of Schoenberg and Webern: "They are called individualists, and yet their work is nothing but a single dialogue with the powers which destroy individuality — powers whose 'formless shadows' fall gigantically on their music. In music, too, collective powers are liquidating an individuality past saving, but against them only individuals are capable of consciously representing the aims of collectivity." [35] The above-mentioned transition to these fine thoughts has to be seen as the dialecticization of an uncertain hope: "As little as regressive listening is a symptom of progress in consciousness of freedom, it could suddenly turn around if art, in unity with society, should ever leave the road of the always-identical." [36]

Let there be no misunderstanding: I am not expecting from Adorno a more subtle construction or the impossible feat of concretizing the meaning of branching off from this road. But did he not himself somewhat darken an

33. Theodor W. Adorno, "On the Fetish Character in Music and the Regression of Listening," *The Essential Frankfurt School Reader* (New York, 1978), pp. 285-286.
34. *Ibid.*, p. 292.
35. *Ibid.*, pp. 298-299.
36. *Ibid.*, p. 298.

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already unreassuring picture when he posited empirically existing reception as closed, homogenous, and monolithic? Any criticism is made even more difficult by the fact that Adorno is talking not about art as a whole, but strictly about music. Now, it happens that in the art of the bourgeois world, expertise has gradually become a distinct level of reception, yet it has by no means everywhere become so decisive a precondition as it has in music since Mozart. I would think that even in this instance, however, artistic reception cannot be identified with conscious cognition. And although this cleavage has not spared any of the arts, nowhere, including the novel, is there so deep a cleavage between entertainment and art as in music. And yet it is a matter up for debate whether "entertaining" music is always and irredeemably as much at the mercy of consumerism as Adorno thinks.[37]

We can only place a few question marks in the path of Adorno's thought; there is no opportunity here to analyze one of the century's most significant aesthetics.[38] In any event, if art has undergone a change of function in two senses (i.e., art does not function, and what functions as art is not art), then the problem that this essay raises is whether it is possible to talk about autonomous art and its historical unity at all. Adorno, upholding the ideal of autonomous art, does not resolve this question. In his work, completely skeptical analyses of reception and immanent analyses of works of art (that nonetheless take reception into account), remain separated. Benjamin, on the other hand, in his "Mechanical Reproduction" essay, and in a few other related pieces, provides a negative resolution and thereby transcends art into the world.

This formulation displays the magnitude of the dilemma. Benjamin makes contact with the most basic questions of every avant-garde movement when he poses as a problem not only the actual effect of the work, but also its effective power, indeed, its power to change the world. If, in general, works of art fail to have effect or if they have merely "exhibition value" for man, then art is a problematic formation and among its functions "the one we are conscious of, the artistic function, later may be recognized as incidental."[39] We are called on to identify the effectiveness of art in practice with its pragmatic usefulness since, in this conception of Benjamin's, capitalism *makes use* of art as a commodity, as an exhibition value, while the revolutionary movement *makes use* of it as an instrument of agitation. The work "as creativity, genius, eternal value and mystery" ceases to exist.[40] There is no way to reconcile this conception with Benjamin's earlier aesthetic ideas, and any experiment that tries to homogenize Benjamin's ambivalent views unwittingly overlooks or

37. One need only consider the numerous currents of jazz but also some forms of popular music which, contrary to Adorno's prophecy, have recently become politically engaged and which, though they cannot yet be judged unequivocally, to a certain extent have fulfilled artistic functions in the communal experiments organized against the bourgeois world.

38. Cf. Ferenc Feher, "Negative Philosophy of Music — Positive Results," in *Magyar Zene* 3 (1971), pp. 237ff.

39. "Mechanical Reproduction," *op.cit.*, p. 227.

40. *Ibid.*, p. 220.

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neglects one side or the other.

In the interests of the practicality of art, Benjamin equally redesigns the function of art in retrospect, presenting the entire history of its reception as a transition from cult function to exhibition function, with the place of the latter having today to be occupied by the political function. (Incidentally, Benjamin cites Hegel — among others — to justify his standpoint and with fantastic insensitivity he misses the real content of the passage: "Fine art has arisen. . . in the church. . . , although it has *already gone beyond* its principle as art.")[41] Instead of the principle of form, the principle of technique is placed in the foreground. At times, he remarks in one place, certain effects are obtainable "only with a changed technical standard, that is to say, in a new art form."[42] And in his lecture "The Author or Producer:" "By mentioning technique I have named the concept which makes literary products accessible to immediate social, and therefore materialist, analysis."[43]

The starting point is the transformation in the needs of reception. Benjamin assesses this transformation in relation to two analogous processes or, rather, two sides of a simple process: the formation of mass arts and the domination of works of art by their techniques of reproduction. (The fetishism of the artistic commodity, as we see in the *Paris-Baudelaire* studies, belongs to this latter category.) "Attention to the technology of reproduction reveals, as does scarcely any other line of inquiry, the decisive importance of reception; it thereby allows the correction, within limits, of the process of reification undergone by the work of art."[44] Reproduction is decisive in Benjamin's eyes because it changes the unique into the mass: it extracts uniformity from the unique object.[45] In this sense, the aura gets a meaning different from the earlier analysis. "The authenticity of a thing is the essence of all that is transmissible from its beginning, ranging from its substantive duration to its testimony to the history which it has experienced. Since the historical testimony rests on the authenticity, the former, too, is jeopardized by reproduction when substantive duration ceases to matter. And what is really jeopardized when the historical testimony is affected is the authority of the object. One might subsume the eliminated element in the term 'aura' and go on to say: that which withers in the age of mechanical reproduction is the aura of the work of art."[46]

The thesis of mechanical reproduction as the basis of modern art highlights the most problematic sides of Benjamin's appropriation of Marx. His program, the "derivation" of "superstructure" from the preconditions of

41. *Ibid.*, p. 274. Emphasis added.
42. *Ibid.*, p. 239.
43. In *Understanding Brecht*, trans. Anna Bostock (London, 1973), p. 87.
44. "Edward Fuchs," *op.cit.*, p. 362.
45. "Mechanical Reproduction," *op.cit.*, p. 625.
46. *Ibid.*, p. 223.

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production, automatically renounces the totality of the work of art:[47] its inquiry is confined to whether the necessarily produced aura-less formation is used for exhibition purposes or political purposes, or clothed in some other documentary content.[48]

Benjamin writes: "The invention of the woodcut may be said to have struck at the root of the quality of authenticity even before its late flowering."[49] We learn two things from this quotation: that Benjamin already sees an enemy of the work's aura in manual reproduction, and that he is dealing primarily with the fine arts. Indeed, Benjamin is less cautious than Adorno. His reasoning is mainly focused on the fine arts, but he wants to validate it across all fields of art. Benjamin's reference to the "substantive duration" of the work, for example, is valid *only* for the fine arts. Similarly, the loss of the "here and now" of the work can be extended only to the music-recording relation. Reproduction itself is primarily a problem of the fine arts, and as Benjamin traces its history as a sequence from woodcut to photograph to film, he assimilates film much too closely to the fine arts.[50] In the fine arts, aura is indeed tied to the work's here-and-now, but even there the relation is not as exclusive as Benjamin thinks. Even there, authenticity does not necessarily disappear in the course of reproduction.

Benjamin, incidentally, contradicts himself on this point. The question of authenticity arises in the case of every work that is not exhibited in its original setting (e.g., not above the altar). In this sense, only the work that fulfills a cult function is "authentic." Its authenticity is destroyed if the authentic meaning of any of its most minute parts is not decipherable by a recipient. At the same time, Benjamin notes elsewhere that "at the time of its origin a medieval picture of the Madonna could not yet be said to be 'authentic.' It became 'authentic' only during the succeeding centuries, and perhaps most strikingly so during the last one."[51] This, however, is connected with a different category of authenticity, probably produced by the capitalist art

47. "When the age of mechanical reproduction separated art from its basis in cult, the semblance of its autonomy disappeared forever." "Mechanical Reproduction," *op.cit.*, p. 228. Cf. "Edward Fuchs," *op.cit.*, pp. 363, 384-385.

48. In his exposition of the state of affairs as such, Benjamin has points of contact with the "tragic" Simmel, who discovered numerous connections between the appearance of mechanical reproduction and money economy. Simmel writes: "As soon as print is invented, the same price per sheet is to be paid for the most miserable work as for the most sublime poem; the moment that photography becomes familiar, the photograph of Titian's 'Bella' is no more expensive than one of a common singer." Georg Simmel, *Philosophie des Geldes* (Drucker und Humblot, 1970), pp. 269ff.

49. "Mechanical Reproduction," *op.cit.*, p. 245.

50. While he assumes some qualitative novelty in film (the unification of science and art), which, strictly speaking, puts an end to art in the old sense, Benjamin fails to perceive the specificity of film as a new form of *art*. Consequently, his observations are sound concerning the limitations of the film actor's artistic work in comparison with the stage actor's, but the completely autonomous artistic work of the film director is omitted from his reflections. The film has points of contact with the visual arts, but not more than theater does with music or drawing with lyrics.

51. "Mechanical Reproduction," *op.cit.*, p. 245.

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trade which speaks of an "authentic" Van Dyck, independently of the meaning of the picture. It is a question here, in effect, of genuineness, and Benjamin identifies this clearly and aptly: "In the imagination of the beholder the uniqueness of the phenomena which hold sway in the cult image is more and more displayed by the empirical uniqueness of the creator or of his creative achievement. To be sure, never completely so; the concept of authenticity always transcends mere genuineness." [52]

In no way does either the wood cut or the copperplate engraving destroy authenticity, conceived in the proper sense of the word, i.e., as not intrinsically connected with either setting or genuineness. On the contrary, as can be shown by the examples of Dürer, Hogarth and others, a new quality of authenticity is created whose essence includes reproducibility and existence in more than one copy. Of course, the situation is different with copies of paintings made from engravings, but even there one can imagine that the engraving offers something new and different in relation to the original. This is undoubtedly true in the reproduction of painting by painting. And Goethe's activities in Italy show to what extent the ideal mode of reception might include the dilettantish copying of great works.

This, however, is not mechanical reproduction. In the evolution of processes of reproduction, notwithstanding reciprocal influences, two main tendencies can be clearly distinguished: one that leads to autonomous art, that constructs a new genre of art on the basis of technical possibilities, and one that remains reproduction. (Thus, for example, in contrast with the great German art of engraving, in Italy even a great discoverer like Marcantonio Raimondi is merely a reproducer.) Even with manual reproduction, we need not draw a line as to where autonomous art may be born; we only have to think of Daumier or Toulouse-Lautrec's great art, based partly on lithographic technique.

But apart from these, even pure reproduction does not necessarily destroy the authenticity of the work. Benjamin writes from a new point of view and about a new situation. Two further elements have to be added. One is the matter of familiarizing ever greater sections of the population with works of art. The other: reproduction is just about the only possibility for obtaining an idea of the life's work of an artist, of his entire art. (In Benjamin's monadic conception, there is very little place for a perspective on the life's work in its unity.) All four moments — if we retain a feel for the original, if the authentic remains behind the reproduction, to which it has to be added — can make the reproduction of works of art a great aid to aesthetic reception. The reception of a reproduction differs from that of an authentic work of art in that a feeling of reservation is coupled to the reception and an impression rather than an opinion is formed about the work.

The above digression is designed to show that the problematic of art cannot be grasped through the analysis of technique. But Benjamin in this study

52. *Ibid.*, p. 246.

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indeed abandons that aim and gives up on the antinomy of art and on its characteristic, artistic function. The question that he raises instead is what can be done through the *given* mode of reception and with technique as it has developed, and he sees a possibility for it to become a significant *political* instrument in a revolutionary transformation. Still, his study raises a number of important questions for aesthetics as well. It illuminates a recently highlighted unknown area in aesthetics: the relation of artistic technique and reception. If Benjamin reduces the work of art to this relation he is, of course, seriously mistaken, but this unelaborated and unresolved problem towers ahead of us if we want to look into the genesis or the basic conditions of the work of art.

If art itself provides testimony about changes in the ways of seeing or the structure of attitudes of society as a totality, then turning points in the fortunes of artistic techniques provide news about an essential element of these changes: alterations in sense perception. As Benjamin emphatically notes: "During long periods of history, the mode of human sense perception changes with humanity's entire mode of existence. The manner in which human sense perception is organized, the medium in which it is accomplished, is determined not only by nature but by historical circumstances as well. The fifth century, with its great shifts of population, saw the birth of the late Roman art industry and the Vienna Genesis, and there developed not only an art different from that of antiquity but also a new kind of perception." [53]

The general proliferation of the mechanical reproduction of works of art truly testifies to this kind of historical turn in sense perception. But Benjamin perceptively stresses these relations elsewhere as well: "The daily sight of a lively crowd may once have constituted a spectacle to which one's eyes had to adapt first. On the basis of this supposition, one may assume that once the eyes had mastered this task they welcomed opportunities to test their newly acquired faculties. This would mean that the technique of Impressionist painting, whereby the picture is garnered in a riot of dabs of color, would be a reflection of experience with which the eyes of a big-city dweller have become familiar. A picture like Monet's 'Cathedral of Chartres,' which is like an ant-heap of stone, would be an illustration of this hypothesis." [54]

Elsewhere, Benjamin points out the connection between the novel and book printing. That is to say, the distinction of the novel "is its essential dependence on the book. The dissemination of the novel became possible only with the invention of printing. What can be handed on orally, the wealth of the epic, is of a different kind from what constitutes the stock in trade of the novel." [55] These fragments, however, just pile questions upon questions. Is artistic technique a homogeneous category? Does it not have to be separately

53. *Ibid.*, p. 224.
54. "On Some Motifs in Baudelaire," *op.cit.*, p. 199.
55. "The Storyteller: Reflections on the Works of Nikolai Leskov," in *Illuminations, op.cit.*, p. 87.

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concretized in each branch of art? (The relation of sense perception and technique in literature, for example, is not nearly so unambiguous as in the visual arts and music.) Should a distinction not be made between the technical condition of a work, or, what amounts to the same thing, its technical possibility, and the internal technique of the work? If so, what is the relation between these two?

The problems multiply and connect in this way and we cannot even think of providing answers in this framework. I am convinced, however, that a fruitful contribution toward a solution may be found in a distinction drawn in the *Elective Affinities* study relating the technique of a work of art to its material content and its form to its truth content. But this means that questions connected with artistic technique can only be resolved if one starts out from problems of form. Otherwise, we may arrive at valuable commentaries, or else at historical and sociological results that provide interesting supplementary material bearing on the connection between the work and technique, but not at aesthetics.

Benjamin, Brecht and Collective Reception

The effective power of art in the world posed the dilemma that led Benjamin to his most fruitful aesthetic thoughts, but it led him all the way to the liquidation of aesthetics as well. If art has until now oscillated between the cult function and the exhibition function, then politically determined reception creates a new quality and discards the entire previous tradition. We must not believe that, as a consequence, art has turned into the pure harbinger of politics. What Benjamin is looking for and what he hopes to achieve with his forced resolution and great sacrifices is "simultaneous collective reception."[56]

Benjamin's faith in an emancipated mankind is too immediate at this point. According to his notion, emancipated mankind is capable of a (collective) mode of reception comprised in self-organization and self-control. The reader, who is familiar from his repertoire of historical memories with rituals of administered self-organization and self-control that lack all spontaneity, needs no further proof that, transposed into the present, this perspective can only constitute a disillusioning utopia, if not, indeed, one marked by tragic real consequences. Benjamin sets out from the given reception, and hence he needs to accept as fact the cleavage between distraction and art. According to his rich aphorism, "Distraction as provided by art presents a covert control of the extent to which new tasks have become soluble by apperception."[57] This is why he seeks and finds in film — which, as we saw, he does not regard as art — a form capable of distracting masses of people, which is said to involve "the liquidation of the traditional value of the cultural heritage."[58]

56. "Mechanical Reproduction," *op.cit.*, pp. 236-237.
57. *Ibid.*, p. 242.
58. *Ibid.*, p. 223.

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In practice, it is the "Mechanical Reproduction" article itself that can be felt to be a painful break with the *whole* of traditional art. It must be stressed that only this essay and a few companion pieces are at issue, since we well know that the entire sequence of the artistic tradition is alive in Benjamin's other writings in a variety of series — originating, for example, from Plato and the Middle Ages — into which occasionally even Brecht's art is inserted.[59] At the same time, it would not be just to show contradictory elements in Benjamin's conception by reference to the general antinomy of the continuity and the discontinuity of art. After all, he never could concur with the continuity of "progress" to a bad infinity. What was always decisive for him was to extract, or to stake out, the now-time, the *Jetztzeit*, which absorbs precisely as much of the past as it needs, that is, as much as can be made sense of from the standpoint of the present. This is what the category of *pre-history* expresses. Benjamin's notion of a redeemed mankind for which the *entire* past becomes relivable[60] stands at one extreme of this continuity — discontinuity conception; at the other is the image in the "Mechanical Reproduction" study of man struggling for freedom, finding virtually nothing usable in the artistic values of the past, but much more in the evolution of technique (in characteristic contradiction with Benjamin's frequently near-romantic anti-technical overall conception).

It is a genuinely distinctive aesthetic consequence of this conception, however, that two principles yoked together replace the principle of the artwork's totality: the work's entertainment function and its progressive content. Together, the two create the effective political function of the work. Benjamin's central problem, his research into the lost communal forms of action, encounters the questions attached to massification and mass movement, and his hurried response is coerced by the recognition that fascism, too, is a mass movement, and must be opposed with full force by another mass movement.

It is obvious that Benjamin's judgment of modern reception in the "Mechanical Reproduction" study shows a kinship with Brecht. The latter also starts with the fetishistic character of bourgeois reception; he too explores the consequences of discarding tradition; for him, as well, the fundamental question is the practical usefulness of art; and his movement in theater, however problematic aesthetically and however much supported by hyper-rationalist social laws, likewise represents, as the aftermath of the 1920s, the search for an active and spontaneous social movement. (This is a search which incorporates the assumption that what is needed is "a powerful movement in society which is interested to see vital questions freely aired with a view to their solution, and can defend this interest against every contrary

59. Cf. "What Is Epic Theater? (First Version)," in *Understanding Brecht*, *op.cit.*, pp. 5-6; "What Is Epic Theater? (Second Version)," *ibid.*, pp. 17-18.

60. "To be sure, only a redeemed mankind receives the fulness of its past — which is to say, only for a redeemed mankind has its past become citable in all its moments." "Theses on the Philosophy of History," No. III, *op.cit.*, p. 256.

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trend.")[61]

Moreover, Benjamin regards Brecht's experiments as providing answers to several of his questions. The shock function of epic theater is an obvious analogy for one of the main functions of film in the Benjaminian perspective.[62] In an essential feature of epic theater, its portrayal of events that are already known, Benjamin discovers an oppositional experiment that offers a response to his own dilemma, the reduced communicability of experience, the end of stories originating in shared experience, and hence the increasingly empty, bare sensation of history.[63] Next to film, Benjamin considers architecture and theater as the forgers of the new receptive behavior, because their reception, according to the nature of the objects, is generally collective, as once was also the case for the story and the epic. In the theater, an audience filled with sympathy without commitment or obligation and tending to be overcome by emotion yields its place to an active receptive *community,* with the effect that the ineffectuality of art is at least in that situation disposed of: this prospect and hope makes Benjamin a partisan of epic theater.

It is not possible to analyze here Brecht's entire production, but I cannot resist voicing my conviction that Brecht, who became a great artist within the sense of his theory or, rather, in spite of his theory, represents a *tertium datur* with respect to his divided, contradictory interpretation. An important part of the theory is immanent to the struggle to achieve the great Brechtian forms, even if these, as autonomous forms which ultimately cannot be subordinated to documentary-agitational tactics, genuinely contradict the fundamental theoretical principles. In his theory of art, the great poet of elementary human feelings and liberating ruses reduces human conduct, including receptive conduct, as well as human feelings, to interests. On this basis he reinterprets Marx's passage about Homer: "If one compares the 'Bateau Ivre' say, with Kipling's 'Ballad of East and West,' one can see the difference betwen French mid-19th century Colonialism and British Colonialism at the beginning of the 20th. It is less easy to explain the effect that such poems have on ourselves, as Marx already noticed. Apparently emotions accompanying social progress will long survive in the human mind as emotions linked with interests, and in the case of works of art will do so more strongly than might have been expected, given that in the meantime contrary interests will have made themselves felt."[64]

At this point, however, Benjamin can no longer follow his great friend. For Brecht, movement and progress (which can be grasped by way of class interest

61. Bertolt Brecht, "Theater for Pleasure or Theater for Instruction," *Brecht on Theater: The Development of an Aesthetic,* edited and trans. John Willett (New York, 1964), p. 76.

62. Cf. "What Is Epic Theater? (First Version)," *op.cit.,* pp. 4-6.

63. Cf. "What Is Epic Theater? (Second Version)," *op.cit.,* pp. 15-16; and "The Storyteller," *op.cit.,* pp. 83-84.

64. Bertolt Brecht, "Short Description of a New Technique of Acting which Produces an Alienation Effect," Appendix 18, "About Rational and Emotional Points of View," *op.cit.,* p. 146.

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as a rational *law*) complete and support one another. For Benjamin, on the other hand, the rational law of progress, in its entire philosophical development, is the stumbling block in bourgeois thought. Not only does the liberal concept of progress teach him this, but the history of the workers' movement as well. In his study of Fuchs, therefore, he writes with withering sarcasm about the development of social democracy: "history began to look deterministic; the triumph of the party was 'inevitable.' "[65]

A researcher who takes into account Benjamin's *entire* work will not be misled by the fact that in the "Mechanical Reproduction" study, in "The Artist as Producer," and occasionally elsewhere, certain rationalist elements work their way into the ensemble of Benjamin's conception. Both creed and resignation are at work in this oeuvre, performing their beneficial and destructive work, and the creed stepping forth from the resigned background leads Benjamin to the theory of dialectical images in the same way as to the vision of simultaneous collective reception. Ultimately, the structure of creed and resignation is displayed most clearly in the "Theses on the Philosophy of History," which symbolically synthesize and bring Benjamin's life work to a truly painful close.

65. "Edward Fuchs," *op.cit.*, p. 369.

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MARXISM AND REVOLUTIONARY ROMANTICISM*

by Michael Löwy

Is romanticism an essentially conservative and reactionary movement? Or does it also contain revolutionary potential by virtue of its opposition to capitalism and bourgeois society? The first difficulty in dealing with these questions is the ambiguity of the romantic phenomenon. Notwithstanding this, however, one of the most fundamental traits of romanticism as a socio-political movement (though inseparable from its cultural and literary manifestations) is *the nostalgia for pre-capitalist societies and a cultural critique of capitalism.*

Etymologically, the term "romantic" contains this reference to the past: to the romance-language literature of the Middle Ages. If so, why extend the concept of romantic nostalgia to the entire gamut of pre-capitalist formations? This objection is all the more justified since for "classical" German romanticism the lost paradise is simply feudal society. Yet, romanticism can and must be defined within a broader frame of reference for the following reason: (1) In Rousseau, who is incontestably the great forerunner of romanticism, there is no sympathy at all for feudalism. The same is true in the 19th century of those eminent representatives of economic romanticism, the Russian populists, and others. (2) The reference to the Middle Ages is ambiguous, since medieval society contains several different social structures: on the one hand, of course, some hierarchical institutions such as knighthood, religious orders, etc.; on the other, some relics of the egalitarian and collectivist rural *gens* community. (3) Various pre-capitalist societies, despite their undeniable differences, contain common traits distinguishing them from the capitalist mode of production. As Lefort stresses, "it is in regard to capitalism . . . that all other social formations reveal their affinity." [1]

In the romantic view of the world the pre-capitalist past is endowed with a series of (real, partially real, or imaginary) virtues, such as the predominance of qualitative values (use values or ethical, aesthetic and religious values), organic community among members, or else the essential role of affective ties — in contrast to modern capitalist civilization, based on quantity, prices, money, commodities, profits, and atomization. When this nostalgia becomes the central axis structuring the whole world view, the result is a romantic idea in the strict sense, as in Germany at the beginning of the 19th century. When

*Translated by David J. Parent.

1. Claude Lefort, "Marx, d'une vision de l'histoire à l'autre," in *Les Formes de l'histoire, essais d'anthropologie politique* (Paris, 1978), p. 210.

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it is a matter of just one element among others in a more complex politico-cultural whole, it is more properly a *romantic dimension* (as in Lukacs in 1922-23).

Most intellectual historians agree in attributing dual paternity to 19th-century romanticism: Rousseau and Burke[2] — the most eminent precursor of 1789 and the most implacable enemy of the Great Revolution! Although in "classical" German romanticism of the beginning of the 19th century, the reaction against the French Revolution is the dominant tendency, in their youth authors such as Kleist, Schlegel and others sympathized with the Revolution, and Hölderlin never renounced his Jacobinism. Because of this, authors such as Carl Schmitt have hastily concluded that "Romanticism dissolves into the simple principle of a subjectivized occasionalism, and the mysterious contradictions of diverse political orientations of so-called political romanticism can be explained by the moral inadequacy of a lyricism for which any content can be the occasion of an aesthetic interest."[3] This interpretation is not only unable to explain strictly political romantic thinkers — such as Adam Müller, whose aesthetic dimension is very limited — but also ignores the fact that a solid nucleus lies behind romanticism: the idealized reference to the pre-capitalist past and an angry critique of some aspects of bourgeois society. Other authors, such as Droz, end up reducing the phenomenon to its conservative and counter-revolutionary aspect.[4] This interpretation tends to dismiss the republican sympathies of the young Schlegel and Kleist as irrelevant biographical episodes and excludes Hölderlin altogether.

In reality, this ambiguity can be rediscovered in late 19th-century romanticism, e.g., in the astonishing journey of Lukacs' friend, the writer Paul Ernst, who went from the most extreme wing of the Socialist Party to an ultra-conservative world view, close to fascism. The same thing happens to the sociologist Robert Michels, a member of the Max Weber circle in Heidelberg who went from a revolutionary socialist before the war to an avowed partisan of Italian fascism.[5]

These surprising political metamorphoses and heterogeneity are just different paths of possible development from the common romantic matrix: nostalgia for pre-capitalist societies. This politico-cultural puzzle can be clarified by developing a tentative typology of the main political patterns of romanticism: (1) *"Past-oriented" or "retrograde" romanticism,* which seeks to re-establish an earlier social state. These terms are preferable to "reactionary," which is too restrictive because of its tie to the reaction against

2. Cf. for example, John Bowle, *Western Political Thought* (London, 1961), Vol. III, Chapter 9, "The Romantic Reaction: Rousseau and Burke."

3. Carl Schmitt, *Politische Romantik* (Munich, 1925), 2nd edition, p. 227.

4. Cf. Jacques Droz, *Le Romantisme allemand et l'Etat* (Payot, 1966), pp. 294ff.

5. Of course, some people went in the opposite direction. For an analysis of anti-capitalist romanticism and of its socio-historical roots in Germany, see my book, *Georg Lukacs — From Romanticism to Bolshevism* (London, 1971), I, 3.

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the French Revolution. For this school, of which Novalis is perhaps the most coherent representative, it is not a matter of *conserving* the status quo, but of *returning* to the Catholic Middle Ages, before the Reformation, the Renaissance and the development of bourgeois society. (2) *Conservative Romanticism,* which, unlike the previous one, simply wants to *maintain* things as they are, untouched by the French Revolution (England and Germany at the end of the 18th century), and to re-establish what existed in France prior to 1789, which already entails a specific articulation of capitalist and pre-capitalist forms. Burke and his *Considerations on the French Revolution* (1798) represent the first great representatives of this school. (3) *"Disenchanted" romanticism,* for which it is impossible to go back to pre-capitalist societies. Despite its faults and cultural decline, industrial capitalism is seen as an irreversible phenomenon. This is the position of turn-of-the-century German sociologists such as Tönnies and even Weber to a certain extent. (4) *Revolutionary romanticism*, which refuses both the illusion of returning to the communities of the past and reconciliation with the capitalist present, seeking a solution in the future. In this school, which includes many socialist thinkers, such as Fourier, Landauer and Bloch, nostalgia for the past does not disappear but is projected toward a post-capitalist future.

Revolutionary romanticism also differs from other romantic schools by the pre-capitalist society it chooses as its frame of reference. It is not the feudal system and its institutions (nobility, monarchy, church, etc.). The pre-capitalist Golden Age varies according to authors, but it is not the one advocated by past-oriented or conservative romantics. For Rousseau and Fourier it is a mythical "state of nature"; for Moses Hess, ancient Judaism; for Hölderlin, the young Lukacs and many others, Greek antiquity; for the Peruvian Marxist José Carlos Mariategui, "Inca communism"; for Russian populists and Landauer, traditional rural communities.

In relation to Landauer, Buber explained the spirit of this type of romanticism as follows: "What he has in mind is...a revolutionary conservation: the revolutionary selection of elements of social existence worth conserving and using for a new construction."[6] Yet, these elements no longer exist and what is at issue is not conservation but a *renaissance*. The essential thing is this: the revolution must reappropriate certain aspects and qualities of pre-capitalist communities. This subtle dialectic between the past and the future frequently passes through a passionate rejection of present capitalist and industrial society. In this context, what is the relation between Marxism and revolutionary romanticism?

At first sight, Marx seems not to have been affected by romanticism. Thus, I have argued that "Marx's socialism had nothing in common, either socially or ideologically, with anti-capitalist romanticism. Its roots lay in a quite different

6. Martin Buber, *Pfade in Utopia* (Heidelberg, 1950).

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sector of the petty bourgeoisie — the Jacobin, enlightened, democratic-revolutionary, anti-feudal and 'Francophile' section — whose brilliant literary representative was Heinrich Heine, an intransigent enemy of romanticism."[7] This has been criticized by Breines and Herf, who have emphasized the importance of romantic roots in Marx's thinking.[8] On close examination, I agree with them that there is in Marx an undeniable romantic dimension. According to Breines, Marx "achieved a fusion of romantic and enlightenment-utilitarian currents of social critism." This seems to be quite accurate, but instead of fusion, it would be more precise to speak of a dialectical overcoming (*Aufhebung*). At any rate, to claim that Marx is anti-romantic because he is a Jacobin and close to Heine is itself contradictory. Inspired by Rousseau, Jacobinism already contains an essential romantic component. And Heinrich Heine, a friend of Marx and an implacable adversary of conservative romanticism, also had a romantic streak: "Despite the war to the death I have waged against romanticism, I nonetheless myself remained a romantic all my life, and more than I myself supposed."[9]

Even if Heine could not be really considered a romantic, other writers who influenced Marx and Engels were decidedly romantics. This is the case, for example, with Carlyle, whose biting critique of capitalism had a profound impact on the thinking of Marx and Engels. In 1944, Engels wrote an enthusiastic review of *Past and Present*, whose diatribe against "mammonism" — the worship of the god of greed, Mammon, who allegedly ruled England — he quoted approvingly. Though critical of its author's conservative options, Engels recognized a decisive link between them and the value of the work. "Carlyle is first and foremost a Tory.... Certainly, a Whig could never have written a book half as humane as *Past and Present*."[10] As for Marx, in 1845 he read Carlyle's little book on chartism, taking numerous notes such as this marvelously romantic image of industrial capitalism: "If men have lost belief in God, their only recourse against a blind non-God of necessity and mechanism, against a terrible world steam engine that imprisons them in its iron stomach like a monstrous Phaloris bull would be,

7. Michael Löwy, *Georg Lukacs, op.cit.*, p. 25.

8. Paul Breines, "Marxism, Romanticism, and the case of Georg Lukacs: Notes on Some Recent Sources and Situations," in *Studies in Romanticism,* 16 (Fall 1977), pp. 475-476; and Jeffrey Herf, "Review of Löwy, *Pour une sociologie des intellectuels,*" *Telos,* 37 (Fall 1978), p. 228. Breines' analysis of the *Manifesto* is very pertinent: "In the *Manifesto* and Marx's previous writings, the capitalist industrial revolution and the entire world of objectified relations it creates are grasped as simultaneously liberating and oppressive.... The Enlightenment and its utilitarian progeny stressed the former side of the picture; the romantic current the latter. Marx stood alone in transforming both into a single critical vision." Yet, Breines is wrong in affirming that in Marx and Engels' writings in the second half of the 19th century only the Enlightenment-utilitarian root blossomed while the romantic one withered.

9. Quoted by Lukacs, "Heine et la revolution de 1848," in *Europe* (May-June 1956), p. 54. Lukacs stresses that we find in Heine's works "a constant dialectical interpenetration, full of contradictions, of romantic tendencies and of tendencies for a definitive overcoming of romanticism."

10. F. Engels, "Die Lage Englands," 1844, in Marx, Engels, *Werke*, Vol. 1 (Berlin, 1961), p. 528.

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with or without hope — *revolt*."[11] In an 1850 article, Engels returned to Carlyle. While irrevocably rejecting his most recent writings, he sketched an analysis of his earlier 1840s works, which is very enlightening: "Carlyle has the merit of having (in his writings) taken a stand against the bourgeoisie in an epoch when the latter's conceptions, tastes and ideas entirely dominated official English literature, and that in a way which at times was even *revolutionary*. For example, in his history of the French Revolution, in his apology of Cromwell, in his pamphlet on chartism, in *Past and Present*. But in all these writings, the critique of the present is *closely connected* with an extraordinarily unhistorical apotheosis of the Middle Ages, incidentally also very frequent among the English *revolutionaries*, for example, Cobbett and some of the chartists."[12] This remark contains two propositions fundamental for a Marxist approach to romanticism: (1) The romantic critique of the capitalist present is "closely connected" with nostalgia for the past; and (2) this critique can in some cases acquire an authentically revolutionary link in the world view of revolutionary romanticism between nostalgia for the past and the future.

Even more important than Carlyle's influence was that of the most unrelenting romantic critic of capitalist civilization: Honoré de Balzac — from whom Engels admits having learned "more than from all the professional historians, economists and statisticians of the period."[13] Of course, their reading of Carlyle and Balzac was highly selective: both Engels and Marx categorically rejected the past-oriented illusions of the two writers. But they unhesitatingly appropriated their romantic critique of capitalism — a critique deeply charged with ethical and cultural values.

Gouldner is thus right in insisting on the "important romantic *components*" in Marx's thought. So is Fisher, in stressing that Marx integrated into his work "the romantic revolt against a world which turned everything into a commodity and degraded man to the status of an object."[14] This component is found, for example, in *The Communist Manifesto*, where, though classifying the anti-capitalist romantic trends as "reactionary," Marx and Engels insist on the value of their social critique. Even "feudal socialism," this mixture *sui generis* of "echoes from the past" and "rumblings of the future," despite its "total inability to understand the march of modern history," has the indisputable merit of "striking at the heart of the bourgeoisie with a bitter and spiritually trenchant critique." As for "petit-bourgeois socialism" (Sismondi and his school), despite its limitations, it must be noted that it

11. Thomas Carlyle, *Chartism* (London, 1840). Noted by Marx in *Excerpthefte* B35AD89a. This unpublished booklet is located in the Marx-Engels Archive at the International Institute of Social History in Amsterdam.

12. In Marx, Engels, *Werke*, Vol. 7 (Berlin, 1961), p. 255. Italics added.

13. Engels, Letter to Miss Harkness, April 1888, in Marx, Engels, *Briefwechsel* (Berlin, 1953), p. 481. The term "romantic" does not here designate a literary genre, but Balzac's social and political *view of the world*.

14. Alvin Gouldner, *For Sociology* (London, 1973), p. 339; and Ernst Fisher, *The Essential Marx* (New York, 1970), p. 15.

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"analyzed with great perspicacity the contradictions inherent in the modern conditions of production. It unmasked the hypocritical apologies of the economists. It demonstrated irrefutably the destructive effects of machinization and of landed property, overproduction, crises, the relentless elimination of the petit-bourgeois and small farmers, the misery of the proletariat, the anarchy of production, the glaring disproportions in the distribution of wealth," etc.[15] An impressive acknowledgement of an intellectual debt! In reality, all anti-capitalist critiques of this "petit-bourgeois" romanticism were integrated by Marx and Engels into their view of bourgeois society — even if they unequivocally rejected as utopian and reactionary the positive solutions they advanced. Moreover, Marx and Engels are not skimpy in their admiration of the "eminently revolutionary" historical role of the conquering bourgeoisie and its economic successes, which are superior to the pyramids of Egypt and the Roman aqueducts — realizations which in their eyes prepared the material conditions for the proletarian revolution.[16]

Starting in the 1860s, Marx and Engels became increasingly interested in certain pre-capitalist social formations. The works of Maurer (the historian of the ancient Germanic communities), and later of Morgan stimulated their evaluation of the past. Thanks to these authors, they discovered an exemplary pre-capitalist formation, distinct from the feudal system exalted by classical romantics: the primitive community. Marx pointed to this *political choice* of a different past in a letter to Engels dated March 25, 1868, in which he wrote about Maurer's book: "The first reaction against the French Revolution and the Enlightenment philosophy connected with it was, of course, to see [it] from a medieval, romantic perspective, and even some people such as Grimm are not exempt from this. The second reaction — and it corresponds to the socialist orientation, although these scholars do not at all suspect that they are connected with it — consists in plunging beyond the Middle Ages to the primitive epoch of each nation. And these people are very surprised to discover the most modern reality in the most ancient times, including even egalitarians to a degree that would thrill Proudhon."[17]

Engels was also struck by Maurer's discoveries, which inspired him to write among other things the little essay on the old Teutonic rural community — an essay that proposes, as a socialist program for the countryside, a renaissance of that type of community.[18] He even went beyond Maurer, who appeared excessively tainted by Enlightenment evolutionism. In a letter to Marx dated

15. Marx, Engels, *Le Manifeste communiste* (Costes, 1953), pp. 99, 102-103.

16. Marx and Engels' remarks on Sismondi pose an important problem: the possibility for thinkers operating from the viewpoint of the past to attain a knowledge of the present deeper in some regards than that of those who identify directly and critically with this present. Marx will return to this question several times, notably in *The Theories of Surplus Value.*

17. Supplement to Engels, *L'Origine de la famille, de la propriété privée et de l'Etat* (Paris, 1975), pp. 328-329.

18. Engels, of course, added: "not in its ancient aspect, which has had its day, but under a rejuvenated form." Engels, "La Marche," 1882, in *Origine de la famille, op.cit.,* p. 323.

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Sept. 15, 1882, he complained of the persistence in Maurer of Enlightenment philosophy's prejudice which asserts that "starting with the Dark Ages constant progress took place; this prevents him not only from seeing the antagonistic character of real progress, but also several setbacks."[19] This passage synthesizes Engels' and Marx's position on this problem: (1) a rejection of the linear and naive (if not apologistic) "progressivism" which considers bourgeois society universally superior to prior social forms; (2) an understanding of the contradictoriness of capitalist progress; and (3) the recognition that from a human viewpoint and compared with the communities of the past, industrial capitalist civilization is in some respects a decline.[20]

A radically anti-romantic Marxism was born only in the struggle against Russian populism with Plekhanov. Evolutionist and admiring capitalist-industrialist progress, this tendency is based on some texts by Marx and Engels, but nothing is more revealing of the difference between this de-romanticized Marxism and Marx's own thinking than the study of the writings of the author of *Capital* on the Russian rural community. Without sharing all the presuppositions of the Narodniki, Marx shared their belief in the future socialist role of the traditional Russian commune (*obshchina*). As he wrote in a letter of March 8, 1881, to Vera Zasulich, "this commune is the fulcrum for the social regeneration of Russia, but in order to function as such it would first be necessary to eliminate the deleterious influences which assail it from all sides and then to assure it of normal conditions for a spontaneous development."[21] The romantic revolutionary problematic of the union between the pre-capitalist past and the socialist future mediated by the rejection of the capitalist present is obvious here — even if Marx insists on the necessity for the Russian rural community to appropriate the technical conquests of European industrial civilization.

The rough draft of the letter to Zasulich also discusses pre-capitalist rural communities in India, which reveals Marx's own intellectual development since the 1850s. In 1853, Marx defined the role of English colonization in India as both monstrously destructive as well as progressive (by the introduction of railroads, etc.) — progress assuming the form of "this hideous pagan idol which stores nectar only in the skulls of the slain."[22] In the 1881

19. Marx, Engels, *Briefwechsel* (Berlin, 1953), p. 425.

20. This became one of the leitmotifs of *The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State*. Everywhere in Morgan's studies on the *gens*, Engels insisted on the *regression* of "civilization" when compared to the primitive community: "What an admirable constitution this *gens* organization is! Without soldiers, gendarmes or police, without nobility, without kings or governors, without prefects or judges, without prisons, without trials, everything runs its regular course.... All are equal and free — including women.... And if we compare their situation with that of the immense majority of the civilized men of our time, the distance between the proletarian or small farmer today and the ancient free member of the *gens* is enormous." Engels, *Origine de la famille, op.cit.*, p. 105. Engels hastens to add: "That is one of the aspects of the thing. But let us not forget that this organization was doomed to destruction."

21. Marx, Engels, *Briefwechsel, op.cit.*, p. 408.

22. Marx, "The Future Results of the British Rule in India," 1853, in *On Colonialism* (London, 1971), p. 90.

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letter, however, Marx wrote: "As for the East Indies, for example, everyone except Sir H. Maine and the likes of him knows that over there the suppression of common ownership of the land was just an English act of violence, *pushing the native people not ahead but backwards.*"[23] Here the emphasis is on the (humanly) *regressive* aspect of capitalism.

Of course, for Marx and Engels industrial capitalism as a world system had played a progressive role, not only by developing the productive forces on an unprecedented scale, but by their partial socialization (through cooperation, the world market, etc.) — two conditions that create the objective possibility for a socialist transformation of the economy. The anti-capitalist romantic dimension is articulated and intermingled with the other resolutely modernist and passionately anti-feudal perspective leading to the *Aufhebung* of both the pre-capitalist past and the bourgeois present.

At the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th, the romantic-revolutionary dimension of Marxism tends to disappear not only from Russian Marxism but from that of the Second International as well.[24] A rare exception here is Luxemburg, who took up Marx and Engels' preoccupations with the primitive community.

The central theme of her *Introduction to Political Economy* (unpublished in her lifetime but brought out by Paul Levi in 1925) was the analysis of this community — which she called the *primitive communist society* — and the critique of capitalist mercantile society. Like Engels and Marx, she passionately studied Maurer's writings and marvelled at the democratic and egalitarian functioning of the German village community and its *social transparency*: "Nothing more simple and more harmonious can be imagined than this economic system of the ancient Germanic Marches. The whole mechanism of social life is out in the open. A rigorous plan, a robust organization here encloses each person's activity and integrates him as an element of the whole. The immediate needs of daily life and their equal satisfaction for all is the point of departure and the culmination of this organization. All work together for all and decide everything for all."[25] She insists on the *universality* of agrarian communism as the general form of human society at a certain stage of its development, which is found not only among Germanic and Slavic peoples but also among Indians, Incas, Kabyls and Hindus.[26]

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23. Supplement to *L'Origine de la famille, op.cit.*, p. 333. Italics added.

24. Russian Marxism took an anti-romantic direction as a result of the anti-populist polemics. This is especially noticeable at the end of the 19th century, when the ideological struggle with the Narodniki was at its peak. See, for example, Lenin's famous brochure *Characteristics of Economic Romanticism — Sismondi and our National Sismondians,* 1897.

25. Rosa Luxemburg, *Introduction à la'economie politique* (Paris, 1970), p. 138.

26. As with Engels in his *Origin of the Family,* Luxemburg is also inspired by Morgan. Using him as a point of departure, she develops a grandiose view of history: an innovative conception of the millennarian evolution of humanity in which contemporary civilization "with its private property, its class domination, its male domination, its state, and its constraining marriage"

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In this perspective, the European colonization of one third of the world was a socially destructive, barbaric and inhumane enterprise.[27] This is the basis for her solidarity with anti-colonial struggles in which she saw the tenacious resistance of old communist traditions to profit and capitalist "Europeanization." There seems to be an alliance here between anti-colonial and anti-capitalist struggles as a revolutionary convergence between the old and the new communism.[28]

Contrary to Luxemburg (or to Marx and Engels), the pre-capitalist reference in the young Lukacs is not primitive communism nor a determinate *economic* formation, but rather certain *cultural* configurations: the Homeric Greek universe, Russian (literary and religious) spirituality, Christian, Hindu or Jewish mysticism. Here and there one can also find mention of medieval Catholicism — notably in regard to the art of Giotto or Cimabue — but it is not central. On the other hand, Lukacs was much closer to classical German romanticism — especially the early 20th-century neo-romanticism of Paul Ernst, Simmel, etc.

This romantic dimension did not disappear when he joined the Hungarian Communist Party in December 1918. He simply combined it with the Marxist world view in an original ideological synthesis.[29] For Lukacs in 1919,

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appears as a mere parenthesis, a transition between primitive communist society and the communist society of the future. The romantic-revolutionary link between the past and the future appears here even more explicitly than in Marx and Engels: "The noble tradition of the remote past thus extended its hand to the revolutionary aspirations of the future, the circle of knowledge closed back harmoniously and, in this perspective, the current world of class domination and exploitation, which claimed to be the *nec plus ultra* of civilization, the supreme end of universal history, was just a minuscule transitory stage on humanity's long march ahead." Luxemburg, *op.cit.*, p. 91.

27. In *The Accumulation of Capital*, she examined again the historical role of English colonialism and was indignant at the criminal contempt of European conquerors toward the ancient system of irrigation: capital, in its blind voracity, "is incapable of seeing far enough to recognize the value of the economic monuments of a more ancient civilization"; colonial policy produces the decline of this traditional system, and consequently famine begins, starting in 1867, to make millions of victims in India. Cf. Rosa Luxemburg, *The Accumulation of Capital* (London, 1951), p. 376.

28. Luxemburg, *Introduction à l'economie politique, op.cit.*, p. 92. On the subject of the Russian rural commune, however, Luxemburg has a much more critical view than Marx. Based on Engels' analyses, which at the end of the 19th century registered the degeneration of the *obshchina*, she shows the *historical limits* of the traditional community and the necessity of overcoming it. Her gaze turns resolutely toward the future, and here she parts ways with economic romanticism in general and with Russian populism in particular, insisting on "the fundamental difference between the world socialist economy of the future and the primitive communist groups of pre-history." *Ibid.*, p. 133.

29. The best expression of this is the essay on "The Old Culture and the New Culture," published at the time of the triumph of the Hungarian workers' council revolution (1919). The thread running through this work is the contrast between the culture of past society and the "non-culture" of capitalism. Lukacs here does not distinguish between the different modes of pre-capitalist production and refers to pre-capitalist epochs as a whole that share common characteristics. First of all, an "artistic spirit" dominated all productive activity: from the viewpoint of creation, printing a book was not, in essence, different from writing it; or painting a picture from finishing a table. Secondly, culture was born from a slow and organic growth in the compost of social existence, and this organicity gave it a harmonious and grandiose character. With the arrival of capitalism, "everything ceased being evaluated for itself, for its intrinsic (e.g.,

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communist society re-established the continuity broken by capitalism: the new culture brought by the proletariat anti-capitalist revolution is intimately bound with the ancient culture of pre-capitalist societies. The future throws a bridge toward the past, over the gaping abyss of capitalist non-culture. This typically romantic-revolutionary problematic reappears in different guises in a 1919 lecture on the changing function of historical materialism. Starting with the Hegelian distinction between *objective spirit* (social relations, law, the state, etc.) and *absolute spirit* (philosophy, art, religion), Lukacs stressed that pre-capitalist societies are characterized by the decisive role of absolute spirit. On the contrary, under capitalism, all active social forces exist only as manifestations of objective spirit. Religion itself becomes a social institution like all others (the Church), comparable to the state, the army, or schools. With communism a period will begin in which absolute spirit — i.e., philosophy, culture, science — once again will dominate economic and social life.[30] In *History and Class Consciousness* (1923), there is less emphasis on the romantic dimension, yet it remains one of the leitmotivs of Lukacs' theoretical universe.

Toward the end of the 1920s, Lukacs' thinking turned against romanticism For some 40 years his soul was torn between an enlightenment outlook and an "anti-capitalist romantic demon," from which he would not free himself. The first is dominant, but occasionally the second resurfaced.

In 1928, Lukacs wrote a very positive review of Carl Schmitt's book, whose thesis he accepted without reservation: absence of political content in romantic thought.[31] Following Schmitt, he discussed the romantics' "incoherence," the "insignificance of their political activity, their anti-scientific subjectivism, their exaggerated aestheticism, etc." This anti-romanticism reappears in 1931 in an article in which he condemns Dostoevsky who had been the main inspiration of his romantic-messianic period up to 1918. Dostoevsky is seen as a "reactionary" and as a representative "of a section of the anti-capitalist romantic intellectual petit-bourgeois opposition"

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artistic or ethical) value and has value only as a saleable or purchasable commodity on the market." This general mercantilization destro, d all possibility of culture in the true sense of the word. Of course, in pre-capitalist epochs culture was reserved for the dominant classes. But under capitalism even they are subject to the movement of the commodity and incapable of authentic cultural creation. Communism offers, for the first time, a culture open to all: a "new culture" that Lukacs sees primarily as a *cultural restoration*. Thanks to the abolition of capitalism, organic development "becomes possible again," social activities lose their commodity function, and their own human finality "is returned to them." Cf. Georg Lukacs, "The Old Culture and the New Culture," *Telos*, 5 (Spring 1970).

30. Georg Lukacs, "Die Funktionswechsel des historischen Materialismus," 1919, in *Taktik und Ethik*, pp. 116-122. The version of this essay published in 1923 in *History and Class Consciousness* is significantly altered. Still, it is interesting to compare Lukacs' idea with Bahro's thesis concerning artistic and politico-philosophical practice as the decisive dimension of an authentic communist society and as the indispensable condition for ending domination. Cf. Rudolf Bahro, *L'Alternative. Pour une critique du socialisme existant réellement* (Stock, 1979), pp. 268-269.

31. Georg Lukacs, "Rezension: Carl Schmitt, politische Romantik," 1928, in *Geschichte und Klassenbewusstsein* (Neuwied, 1968), pp. 695-696.

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for which "a wide avenue opens toward the right, toward reaction (today toward fascism) and on the other hand a narrow and difficult path toward the left, toward revolution."[32]

A few years later, however, in another article on Dostoevsky, Lukacs not only "rehabilitated" the great Russian writer but also developed a particularly brilliant and penetrating analysis of the *revolutionary* dimension of anti-capitalist romanticism. All of Dostoevsky's work, he wrote, manifests "a revolt against the moral and spiritual deformation of man that results from the development of capitalism." To this degradation, he opposes the nostalgia for a Golden Age characterized by harmony among men. "This dream is the authentic core...of Dostoevsky's utopia, a world in which...culture and civilization will not be an obstacle to the development of the human soul. The spontaneous, savage and blind revolt of Dostoevsky's characters takes place in the name of this Golden Age, and whatever the content of the spiritual experience, it always has an unconscious relation to this Golden Age. This revolt is the poetic and historically progressive grandeur of Dostoevsky; here a light truly rose in the darkness of the misery of St. Petersburg; a light which illuminated the roads for the future of humanity."[33] *The Golden Age of the past which lights the road toward the future:* one could hardly imagine a more striking formula to capture the romantic-revolutionary wofld view, for which Lukacs here shows undeniable sympathy.[34]

It is tempting to attribute Lukacs' warm re-evaluation of anti-capitalist romanticism in 1939-41 to the political context: the German-Soviet pact and the open hostility of the Soviet Union towards "capitalist democracies." Some references to current affairs in the text confirm this hypothesis. Thus, Lukacs

32. Georg Lukacs, "Ueber den Dostojewski Nachlass," *Moskauer Rundschau* (March 1931). Lukacs compares Dostoevsky's journey from revolutionary conspiracy to orthodox religion and csarism with Schlegel's shift from republican romanticism to Metternich and the Catholic church. This article provides for the first time an analysis that reappears in most of Lukacs' later works on anti-capitalist romanticism. On the one hand, there is the recognition of the contradictoriness of the phenomenon, while on the other, a sometimes excessive tendency to consider the reactionary and even pre-fascist predisposition as the dominant pole. Not by chance, this essay aroused the indignation of his friend, Ernst Bloch, and led to a cooling of their relations — followed some years later by their polemics about expressionism (1934), which is actually a polemic about romanticism.

33. Georg Lukacs, "Dostojevski," in *Russische Revolution, Russische Literatur* (Rohwolt, 1969), pp. 148-149. In this edition the article is dated 1943, but in reality it had already been published in Russian in the journal *Literaturniy Kritik*, 9 (1936).

34. This sympathy reappears in a series of articles Lukacs wrote in Moscow in 1939-41 and which has remained unpublished until recently. His point of departure is some of Marx's and Engels' texts on anti-capitalist romanticism: the passage on feudal socialism in the *Manifesto*, the articles on Carlyle, etc. He insists on the *merits* the two authors recognize in this movement's critique of capitalism and analyzes in this light the works of writers such as Balzac, Tolstoy, Scott, etc. Against some Soviet literary critics (Kirpotin, Knipovich), who contrast "progressive" bourgeois thought with Balzac's "reactionary" conceptions, Lukacs rejects what he considers a liberal-bourgeois ideological tradition: "the mythology of a struggle between 'reason' and 'reaction,' " or, in another variant, the myth of the struggle of "the bright angel of bourgeois progress...with the black demon of feudalism." For him, Balzac's (or Carlyle's) relentless critique of capitalism is *profoundly clairvoyant*, particularly in regard to its culture-*destructive* role. Cf. Georg Lukacs, *Ecrits de Moscou* (Paris, 1974), pp. 243, 257.

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accuses his adversaries of not having overcome the ideology of the Popular Front. Yet, this would be inaccurate. Whatever the case, after the war Lukacs again disassociated himself from romanticism by developing a series of analyses which sometimes astonishingly resemble a sophisticated version of the mythical struggle between the "bourgeois angel of Enlightenment" and the "black feudal demon" he spoke of ironically in 1941. For example, in 1945, in the essay on Mann, he described the plot of *The Magic Mountain* as "the intellectual duel between the representatives of light and darkness, between the Italian humanist-democrat Settembrini and the Jewish pupil of the Jesuits Naphta, propagator of a Catholic-oriented system prefiguring fascism," thus grossly reducing the paradoxical romantic ideology of Naphta to a "reactionary and anti-capitalist demagoguery."[35] During the same period (1946), in his *Short History of German Literature*, Lukacs stressed the obscurantist and "unhealthy" nature of romanticism, notably in Novalis, and insisted that "the critique of romanticism is one of the most pressing tasks of the history of German literature. This critique could never be rigorous enough."[36] This narrow conception runs through all of Lukacs' post-war writings, reaching its peak with *The Destruction of Reason* (1953), which presents the history of German thought from Schelling to Tönnies and from Dilthey to Simmel as an immense confrontation between "reaction" and "reason," and all romantic currents "from the historical school of law to Carlyle" as leading necessarily to a "general irrationalization of history" and, later, to fascist ideology.[37]

Only much later, during the last years of his life, did Lukacs return to a more nuanced and open approach to romanticism. This is true especially in his 1967 preface to the second edition of *History and Class Consciousenss*, where he recognized that "ethical idealism, with all its anti-capitalist romantic elements," had given him "something positive," and that these elements "with multiple and profound modifications" were integrated into his new (Marxist) view of the world.[38] This tortuous and contradictory itinerary which shows Lukacs' thinking to resemble that of Hans Castorp, the hero of *The Magic Mountain,* oscillating constantly between two poles: a "Marxist Settembrini" or a "revolutionary Naphta" — proves how difficult it was for Lukacs to overcome the antinomies of his own thinking and to take up the romantic challenge.

Lukacs and Luxemburg are two particularly significant but different examples of the integration of certain revolutionary romantic themes into a Marxist context. The interest in these attempts is far from purely historical.

Herbert Spencer, the prolific and polygraphic sycophant of capitalist

35. Georg Lukacs, "A la recherche du bourgeois," 1945, in *Thomas Mann* (Paris, 1976), p. 37.
36. Georg Lukacs, *Brève Histoire de la litterature allemande,* 1946 (Paris, 1949), p. 94.
37. Lukacs, *Die Zerstörung der Vernunft* (Berlin, 1955), p. 105.
38. Georg Lukacs, "Vorwort," 1967, *Geschichte und Klassenbewusstsein* (Neuwied, 1968), pp. 12-13.

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industry, wrote a century ago that the future of industrial society would necessarily and inevitably produce the disappearance of militarism and wars. Today, after two world catastrophes, after Auschwitz and Hiroshima, the traditional link between technical development and "progress" seems very problematic and it is becoming difficult to deny that some aspects in some pre-capitalist formations were superior to capitalist industrial civilization.

Today, thanks to "technical progress," not only does humanity find itself under the permanent menace of an atomic holocaust, but we are also rapidly approaching a catastrophic rupture of the planet's ecological equilibrium. As for the so-called "socialist" states (the Soviet Union and China), they appear less and less like a real alternative to this civilization and, on the contrary, they seek to imitate as faithfully as possible the methods of production and forms of consumption of capitalist societies. This explains the importance of rediscovering the romantic-revolutionary dimension of Marxism and enriching the socialist perspective of the future with the lost heritage of the pre-capitalist past, with the precious treasure of communal, cultural, ethical and social qualitative values, submerged since the advent of capitalism in the "glacial waters of egoist calculation."

In an essay written in the 1920s, Thomas Mann proposed a pact between the romantic conception of culture and revolutionary social ideas — Greece and Moscow, Hölderlin and Marx.[39] Moscow is no longer the hearth of the revolution, but this proposition, in its general spirit, seems to open a fertile, still relatively unexplored terrain for a renewal of Marxist thought and revolutionary imagination.

39. Thomas Mann, "Kultur und Sozialismus," in *Die Forderung des Tages* (Berlin, 1930), p. 196.

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ORIGINS AND MEANING OF WORLD WAR I

by John Zerzan

World War I, in Jan Patocka's words, "That tremendous and, in a sense, cosmic event,"[1] was a watershed in the history of the West and the major influence on our century. Regarding its causes, nearly all the discussion has concerned the degree of responsibility of the various governments, in terms of the alliance system (ultimately, the Triple Entente of England, France and Russia and the Triple Alliance of Austria-Hungary, Germany, and Italy) which, it is alleged, had to eventuate in worldwide war. The other major focus is the Marxist theory of imperialism, which contends that international rivalry caused by the need for markets and sources of raw materials made inevitable a world war. Domestic causes have received remarkably little attention, and when the internal or social dynamics have been explored at all, several mistaken notions, large and small, have been introduced.

The genesis of the war is examined here in light of the social question and its dynamics; the thesis entertained is that a rapidly developing challenge to domination was destroyed by the arrival of war, the most significant stroke of counter-revolution in modern world history. If the real movement was somehow cancelled by August 1914, it is clear that the usual reference (in this case Debord's) to "the profound social upheaval which arose with the first world war"[2] is profoundly in error.

Some observers have noted, in passing, the prevalence of uncontrolled and unpredictable violence throughout Europe prior to the war, perhaps the most telling sign of the haunting dissatisfaction within an unanchored society. This could be seen in the major nations — and in many other regions as well. Halèvy, for example, was surprised by the 1913 general strikes in South Africa and Dublin, which "so strangely and unexpectedly cut across the feud between English and Dutch overseas, between Protestant and Catholic in Ireland."[3] Berghahn saw that Turkey as well as Austria-Hungary "were threatened in their existence by both social and national revolutionary movements."[4] Sazonov's *Reminiscences* refer to the sudden outbreaks of rioting in Constantinople, and to the Dashnaktzutium, Armenian radicals, of whom it was "difficult to discern" if they were more directed against Turkey or intent on fomenting a revolution at home.[5] And Pierre van Paasen's memoirs tell of a social peace disintegrating in prewar Holland: "A new spirit invaded the community. For one thing, the shipyard workers no longer

1. Jan Patocka, "Wars of the 20th Century and the 20th Century as War," *Telos* 30 (Winter 1976-77), p. 116.
2. Guy Debord, *Society of the Spectacle* (Detroit, 1977), thesis 97.
3. Elie Halèvy, *The World Crisis of 1914-1918* (Oxford, 1930), p. 17.
4. V.R. Berghahn, *Germany and the Approach of War in 1914* (New York, 1974), p. 14.
5. S.D. Sazanov, *Reminiscences: Fateful Years, 1906-1916* (London, 1925), pp. 123, 140.

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drifted home at nights in small groups or singles. They came marching home . . . all of them singing, singing as if they wanted to burst their lungs, so that the windows rattled. What had come over these fellows?"[6]

Instead of analysis of this telling background, the coming of war is typically trivialized by a concentration on the assassination of the Austrian Archduke Franz Ferdinand, and the nature and duration of the ensuing carnage falsified as a surprise development. In fact, neither of these approaches to the meaning of the war holds up under a moment's scrutiny.

On the face of it, the Serbian militant who shot the Hapsburg Archduke did not so simply plunge Europe into hostilities; this can be seen first of all by the fact that six weeks passed between the June act and the August mobilizations. Zeman writes of this: "Indeed, in all the capitals of Europe, the reaction to the assassination of the heir to the Hapsburg throne was calm to the point of indifference. The people took little notice; the stock exchange registered hardly a tremor."[7]

As for the "surprise" as to the length and design of the war itself, it must be stressed that trench warfare — the hallmark of World War I — was anything but new. Employed 50 years before in the American Civil War, in the Crimea, and at Palevna (1877-78), as in the Russo-Japanese War of 1904-05, it is little wonder that military authorities predicted it. Ivan Bloch's six-volume *The Future of War* emphasized trench warfare and the totality of modern war; the work was discussed in ruling circles from the 1890s on. The adjustment of the record brings us closer to the thesis of war as a needed discharge of accumulated tensions, requiring a form and duration equal to the task of extinguishing radical possibilities.

L.T. Hobhouse viewed domestic problems in Europe as successively more clamorous, creating a crescendo of urgency. "Thus the catastrophe of 1914 was. . .the climax of a time of stress and strain."[8] Similarly, Stefan Zweig wrote of the outbreak of war: "I cannot explain it otherwise than by this surplus force, a tragic consequence of the internal dynamism that had accumulated. . .and now sought violent release."[9] The scale and conditions of the war had to be equal to the force straining against society, in order to replace this challenge with the horror and despair that spread from the battlefields to darken the mind of the 20th-century West.

Beyond the initial value of war in promoting centralization and acceptance of authority, a far larger objective can be seen. In Wells' words, "greater happiness, and a continual enlargement of life, has been checked violently and perhaps arrested altogether."[10] Vibrant before the four years of death was the desire and expectation of significant change, not to be confused with the bourgeois ideology of positivism, ossified and insipid, which was being

6. Pierre van Paasen, *Days of our Years* (New York, 1946), p. 46.
7. Z.A.B. Zeman, *The Gentleman Negotiators* (New York, 1971), p. 46.
8. L.T. Hobhouse, *The World in Conflict* (London, 1915), p. 15.
9. Stefan Zweig, *The World of Yesterday* (New York, 1943), p. 197.
10. H.G. Wells, *The Salvaging of Civilization* (New York, 1922), p. 1.

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challenged in popular life."[11]

The monotonous, uniform present of industrial society, complete with Weberian forecast of increasing bureaucratization, was indeed becoming more and more miserably palpable. And leftist ideology seemed just as increasingly threadbare as measured against this reality. War provided an escape from both daily life and the chance of its transcendence. By 1914, whatever emancipatory visions Marxism might once have represented were moribund; with the war, anarchism, which had seemed to Laurence Lafore "imposingly vigorous,"[12] was also demolished.

To examine the generalized internal crisis and the means by which it was successfully deflected and destroyed by World War I, the various countries — beginning, in rough order, with the less developed and ending with Germany and England — are surveyed here.

The act that eliminated the would-have-been Emperor of Austria-Hungary was by no means an atypical one: Russian Prime Minister Stolypin had been assassinated in 1911, as was Canalejas, Premier of Spain in 1912, and King George of Greece in 1913, to cite other prominent fatalities. In fact, there were several attempts upon the lives of Hapsburg royalty during the imminent prewar years, and even more than one against Franz Ferdinand on that particular notorious summer 1914 afternoon. All the more suggestive, then, that the Archduke paid his state visit on the anniversary of Kossovo, the national day of that restive vassal nation of the Hapsburgs. Similar in provocation would have been a visit by the British royalty to Dublin on St. Patrick's day in, say, 1916. And in passing, it is perhaps worth mentioning that the universally agreed upon figure for this and other Balkan dramas, the nationalist (or nationalist student, more exactly), is rather too readily typecast. Valiani noted the revival of anarchist affiliation and influence in Serbia and Bosnia,[13] and it is well established that Franz Ferdinand's assassins were hardly exclusively nationalist. War, of course, always requires a good excuse, especially when the state's real enemies are, more clearly than usual, its own citizenry; the Sarajevo outrage was tailor-made to the needs of the ailing regime.

The latifundist system of feudal rule on the land, allied with a quite usurious brand of capitalism, provided the background for a very potent social revolutionary dynamic that outweighed even the nationalist-separatist stresses of the exceedingly polyglot empire. In the ancient capital, a descending lassitude mirrored the crumbling rule; the leitmotif of countless works is Vienna's strange atmosphere of "something coming visibly to an

11. This general idea is sometimes mentioned in passing, rarely explored or developed. David Thomson saw that "The established authorities were everywhere subject [by 1914] to a recurrent challenge which struck at the roots of their power — the challenge of mass revulsion against the exacting disciplines of industrial urban civilization." Thomson, *Europe since Napoleon* (New York, 1962), p. 505.

12. Laurence Lafore, *The Long Fuse: An Interpretation of the Origins of World War I* (Philadelphia, 1965), p. 15.

13. Leo Valiani, *The End of Austria-Hungary* (New York, 1973).

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end." Hofsthmannthal's Elektra cries, 'Can one decay like a rotten corpse?" His striking play of the same name is the perfect artifact of imperial Vienna, in its vision of disaster. In fact, the drama is an extremely apt allegory of Europe at large, portraying the obsessive need for a bloodletting out of a terror of death.

As Norman Stone put it, "Official circles in Austria-Hungary calculated general conflict in Europe was their only alternative to civil war."[14] Thus the ultimatum was served on Serbia, following the death by Serbians of Franz Ferdinand, was merely a pretext for war with Russia and that general conflict. War was declared on Serbia, with the corresponding involvement of Russia, despite the acceptance of the ultimatum; Serbia's capitulation, widely hailed as Austria's "brilliant diplomatic coup," therefore meant nothing. The immense significance of Austria's internal problems demanded war and a more complete reliance on its perennial school of civic virtues, the Hapsburg army.

Very critical to the success of this tactic was the organizational hegemony of the Marxian mass party over the working classes. The Austrian Social Democratic Party, most degenerate of the European left, was actually committed to the maintenance of the monarchy and its federative reorganization.[15]

When war came, it was billed as an unavoidable defense against the menacing eastern behemoth, Russia. The left, of course, cast its parliamentary votes in favor of war and immediately instituted war measures against work stoppages and other forms of insubordination. Although some Czechs threw down their arms upon being ordered against Russia, hostilities were initiated without serious resistance.[16] But, in the words of Arthur May, "Disaffection and discontent among the rank and file" took only months before the prosecution of the war was "seriously affected."[17]

Food riots were common by 1915 and had spread to the heart of Vienna by late 1916. Professor Josef Redlich's journal recorded that the population seemed pleased when Prime Minister Strugkh was shot to death by a renegade Socialist in October 1916. The Social Democratic Party was completely dedicated, meanwhile, to the "cooperation of all classes," and it organized scores of peace meetings — not of an anti-war variety, but to restrain the masses from breaches of the "domestic peace."[18]

With people wearied, bled dry by four years of apocalypse, rule was

14. Norman Stone, "Hungary and the Crisis of 1914," in Laqueur asnd Mosse, eds., *1914: The Coming of the First World War* (New York, 1970), p. 147.

15. Peter F. Sugar, "The Nature of the Non-Germanic Societies under Hapsburg Rule," *Slavic Review* XI:1 (March 1963), p. 29.

16. Edward Crankshaw, *The Fall of the House of Hapsburg* (London, 1963), p. 448.

17. Arthur J. May, *The Hapsburg Monarchy, 1867-1914* (New York, 1968), p. 492.

18. Bottomore and Goode, eds., *Austro-Marxism* (Oxford, 1978), p. 132: Marxist leader Max Adler, in "The Ideology of the War" (1915), warned that "the class standpoint of the proletariat does not in any way diminish its duty and natural inclination to defend the fatherland."

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preserved following the collapse of the dynasty by the remaining servants of power. The Social Democrats continued their basic role — with the equally anti-revolutionary Christian Democrats — and were to govern Austria for 15 years, paralleling in many ways that postwar prelude to German National Socialism, the Weimar Republic. In Hungary, six months of Social Democratic rule was followed by the bureaucratic-totalitarian efforts of Bela Kun's Hungarian Soviet Republic (with Lukacs as Commissar of Culture); four months of this Leninist failure were enough to usher in the Horthy regime, what was to be a quarter-century of reaction.

War, in the case of Russia, did not prevent a revolution from occurring, but its mammoth ravages dictated the instant deformation of that revolution — the victory of the Bolshevik project. The class structure of Romanov society was too bankrupt to avoid demise; Z.A.B. Zeman wrote, for example, of the "amazing ease of the dynastic collapse in Russia."[19] But the unparalleled destruction and suffering of the millions of combatants (and non-combatants) in itself, rendered a whole, breathing revolution impossible.

The Austro-Hungarian declaration of war on small, slavic Serbia enabled a barely sufficient response to the Kremlin's consequent call to arms; Pan-Slavism, not Czarism, was the last pro-war chord that could be successfully struck by a doomed regime. Russia's war with Japan had been a clear attempt to direct internal ferment into calmer, patriotic channels; defeat set off the 1905 revolution. In 1914, only a victorious war could conceivably offer hope for the status quo. Barring war, "within a short time," as Germany's Prince von Bulow wrote, "revolution would have broken out in in Russia, where it was ripe since the death of Alexander III in 1894."[20]

From 1909, various international incidents and crises, mainly in North Africa and the Balkans, arose with regularity to try to divert popular attention in Europe from the gathering social crisis. Throughout the West, authority was deeply on the defensive in this final period, and Russia is not an exception: since at least 1909 state weakness was a glaring constant. By then the memories of post-1905 repression were fading and "the temper of the factory workers was turning revolutionary again," according to Taylor.[21] And discontent was rising even faster due to the more reactionary policies of the regime following Stolypin's assassination in 1911. When the workers of the Lena gold fields were attacked by troops in April 1912, this act of savagery not only failed to cow the oppressed, but in fact it aroused workers all over Russia to a new wave of challenge.[22] In the two years before the war, the curve of social disorder had steadily mounted, meaning that another year of peace would surely have seen new and even more serious upheavals.

Edmund Wilson observed that "by 1913 and 1914 there was a strike wave even bigger than that of 1905." By the spring and early summer of 1914, a

19. Zeman, *op.cit.*, p. 146.
20. Hans von Bulow, *Memoirs of Prince von Bulow*, Vol. 3 (London, 1932), p. 148.
21. Edmund Taylor, *The Fall of the Dynasties* (Garden City, N.Y., 1963), p. 243.
22. Edward Crankshaw, *The Shadow of the Winter Palace* (London, 1976), pp. 452-453.

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movement, initiated especially by the Baku oil workers and women factory operatives of St. Petersburg, had brought "the proletariat again to the barricades."[23] As Arno Mayer succinctly put it, "during the first seven months of 1914, industrial unrest reached unparalleled intensity, much of it politically and socially motivated."[24] Thus the guns of August roared, the timing all but unavoidable.

The war to save oppressed and threatened slavdom, launched with a momentary enthusiasm, was soon flagging. Meriel Buchanan's biography of her father, the British ambassador to Russia, bemoaned "how brief and frail was that spirit of devotion and self-sacrifice, how soon doubt and despair, impatience, lassitude, and discontent crept in."[25] Widely recounted was the lament of state ministers by mid-1915: "Poor Russia! Even her army, which in past ages filled the world with the thunder of its victories...turns out to consist only of cowards and deserters!"[26] Certainly by the widespread mass strikes of January and February 1916, the civil truce had been definitively broken.

The anarchist tide rose swiftly during the war for a time, despite the general draining effect of the gigantic bloodshed and the specific disillusionment caused by the pro-war position of Kropotkin. This latter accommodation to state power, widely seen of course as a betrayal of principle, was in fact shared by a majority of Russian anarchist ideologues, especially in Moscow.[27] The capitulation at the top led to the greater success of syndicalism among many anti-authoritarians, a more "practical," less "utopian" ideology. Another moment of the dimming of radical perspectives.

Kropotkin — like Rocker — located the reason for war in the competition for markets and the quest for colonies, ignoring, with the Marxists, the overarching domestic dynamic for an external, mechanistic etiology. And his untiring efforts to urge on the troops of the Entente to the greater killing of the Central Powers' counterparts evokes Marx and Engels, who could always be counted on to identify the more "progressive" state to support in a given war.

The collapse of the Romanov autocracy in March 1917 demonstrated that the spiritual exhaustion of the proletariat was not so advanced as to allow the greatly overdue dynasty any further borrowed time. Lenin, who had been surprised by every revolutionary outbreak in Russia,[28] could see in mid-1917 that the disintegration of the provisional government was soon to be a reality. His victory in that maimed dimension and the consequent Bolshevik counter-revolution is an all too familiar tale in its details.

Italy, turbulent through the 1890s and the first decade of the century,

23. Edmund Wilson, *To The Finland Station* (Garden City, N.Y., 1953), p. 453.
24. Arno Mayer, "Domestic Causes of the First World War," Brody and Wright, eds., *Elements of Political Change* (New York, 1967), p. 207.
25. Meriel Buchanan, *Diplomacy and Foreign Courts* (London, 1925), p. 169.
26. Leon Trotsky, *The Russian Revolution* (Garden City, N.Y., 1959), p. 17.
27. Paul Avrich, *The Russian Anarchists* (New York, 1978), pp. 118-119.
28. Zeman, *op.cit.*, p. 10.

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arrived at the prewar years in a volatile state. Propaganda in favor of conquest and expansion had failed to detract the submerged classes from the essential; at the elections of 1913 only three Nationalists were elected to the chamber.[29]

The months preceding the war were marked by rioting and strikes on a wide scale, culminating in the famous Red Week of early summer. During demonstrations by anarchists and republicans, violence broke out on the Adriatic coast; this week of June 1914 was to see its quick spread, into a general strike and countrywide riots. F.L. Carsten provides particulars: "In the Romagna and the Marches of Central Italy there were violent revolutionary outbreaks. Local republics were set up in many smaller towns, and the red flag was hoisted on the town hall of Bologna. Officers were disarmed; the military barracks were besieged in many places."[30]

The populace displayed, in outlook and methods, an anarchic, autonomous temper that found its reflection in the anti-war position of the whole left. In this moment the syndicalist discovery of the myth of the nation seemed far away; that a national syndicalism was but a year off could hardly have been forecast with practical results. An overwhelming sentiment for neutrality cancelled Italy's alliance with Austria-Hungary and Germany, and rendered war far too dangerous a card to be played in hopes of defusing class war — for the time being.

By the spring of 1915, every major European nation had been at war for over half a year, with Italy being drawn steadily toward the abyss despite popular resistance. A friend of von Bulow stated in May, "how the [Italian] Minister of the Interior had said to him that if there were a plebiscite there would be no war."[31] Zeman, likewise speaking of May 1915, observed that "Rome came to the verge of civil war."[32] Foreign elements engineered, with paid demonstrators, pro-interventionist riots against the neutralists — who received no police protection and suffered a vicious pro-war press. Rennell Rodd and others who thought they saw spontaneous enthusiasm for war there were largely deceived.

In mid-May the Turin workers declared a general strike, while the Socialist Party debated its position regarding Italy's apparently imminent participation in the war. "All the factories were closed, all public services completely paralyzed. The strike was total among all categories of workers," according to Mario Montagna's memoirs, quoted by John Cammett. Cammett continues the narrative: "The entire working force of the city gathered before the Chamber of Labor, and then slowly marched — without the urging of speeches — toward the Prefecture to protest the war."[33] Fighting ensued but the strike came to an end on May 19, chiefly due to the

29. F.L. Carsten, *The Rise of Fascism* (Berkeley, 1971), p. 20.
30. *Ibid.*, p. 45.
31. Von Bulow, *op.cit.*, p. 254.
32. Zeman, *op.cit.*, p. 10.
33. John M. Cammett, *Antonio Gramsci and the Origins of Italian Communism* (Stanford, 1967), p. 36.

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isolation and demoralization brought on by the Party's refusal to support this self-authorized initiative. Meanwhile, the "revolutionary" syndicalists had become the first section of the Italian left to advocate war, arguing that reactionary Austria must not be allowed to defeat progressive France. On May 23, Italy entered the war.

Mussolini's radically rightward shift, in full swing at this time, is a particular symptom of the intense frustration caused by the left's inaction and betrayals. The young Gramsci, in fact, showed a passing sympathy for Mussolini's new pro-war position and his disgust with the passivity enforced on the proletariat.[34] When oppositional ideology and its arbiters assume such a renunciation of movement, the way is prepared for steadily more backward forms for thwarted class energies to assume. Forward avenues seem completely blocked and there was thus little alternative to the channel and dictates of war.

Giampero Carocci, among others, noted that after three and a half years of war, "the majority of workers and some of the peasants (particularly in the Po Valley, in Tuscany and in Umbria)" still "longed for revolution"[35] — but the pervasive postwar discontent was of an anxious, pessimistic kind.

The occupation of the factories, in the fall of 1920, bears the full imprint of a proletariat cheated and blocked by the left and battered by war. Despite the enormous scale of the takeovers, both the industrialists and the government simply let the neutered movement take its course, without state interference. In early September, the apparent conquests provoked some alarm, to be sure, but the ever more weary and confused workers stayed politely in the factories under control of the unions and the left;[36] "communist leaders refrained from every initiative," reported Angelo Tasca.[37] The restless and anxious occupiers saw neither the outlet to expand their action nor the enrgies, by this point, to forge new ones. The seizure of virtually the entire industrial plant of Italy — not to mention the extensive land takeovers — simply died away, leaving a feeling of total defeat.[38] Mussolini's accession to power followed this fiasco by less than two years.

Recent historical analysis, especially that of A. James Gregor, has demonstrated the substantive continuity between Italy's most militant socialism — syndicalism — and fascism, with the war serving as essential mode of transition. The career of Mussolini, from activist and major theoretician of syndicalism to activist and architect of fascism, by way of World War I, is only one connection.[39] Syndicalism, then national syndicalism, provided the core social and economic content of ascendant

34. Gramsci expressed this attitude in his first signed published article, in October 1914. James Joll, *Antonio Gramsci* (London, 1977), p. 42.
35. Giampero Carocci, *Italian Fascism* (London, 1974), p. 10.
36. Paolo Spriano, *The Occupation of the Factories: Italy 1920* (London, 1975), pp. 74-76.
37. Quoted by Spriano, *ibid.*, p. 77.
38. Carsten, *op.cit.*, pp. 53-54.
39. A. James Gregor, *The Young Mussolini and the Intellectual Origins of Fascism* (Berkeley, 1979).

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fascism. The congruence begins with a common mass-mobilization, industrialization basis but does not end there; the essentials of nascent fascism were, in Gregor's words, "the product of syndicalist lucubrations, syndicalist sentiment, and syndicalist convictions."[40]

At the end of the century, French socialists and anarchists were swept into the mainstream of controversy over the legal treatment of Dreyfus, an army officer convicted of espionage. The arms of the republican family hence embraced new elements, whose integration had been open to question; in Dreyfusism we see an early appearance of the popular front, the recuperative answer to reaction, real or otherwise.

The depths were quickly plumbed. It is here that the Socialist Millerand, scandalizing the slow, became the first of his ideological brand to enter a government. A government, by the way, that had been recently disgraced by the infamous Panama finance scandal and which counted as its minister of war General Gallifet, butcher of the Commune. Minister of War Millerand would be the most chauvinist of prewar officials, later joined by his Socialist colleague, Albert Thomas, wartime minister of munitions.

It is not a surprise that so-called revisionism led to nationalism, nor that this course and its electoral methods would alienate the oppressed with its crass opportunism. In fact, there were many signs of a widespread disinterest in politics; Clemenceau's seventeen-point social reform program of 1906, for example, elicited no popular response.[41] An acute Cabinet instability began to emerge, due in part to the fact that the enragés of the far left made it increasingly harder for Marxists to cooperate with the center left. Oron Hale averred that the working class movement drifted away from parliamentarism toward radicalism in the five years before 1914.[42] And it was just before this period that Sorel, with customary acidity, warned: "A proletarian violence which escapes all valuation, all measurement, and all opportunism may jeopardize everything and rule socialistic diplomacy."[43]

But even in terms of orthodox political maneuvering, light is shed upon the threat to the existing order. An order, one might add, exhibiting such signs of decay as the persistent financial scandals. The amazing murder of the editor of *Figaro* by the finance minister's wife brought these to new heights in March 1914.

The April elections, whose chief issue was the 1913 law prescribing three years' military service, returned "the most pacific chamber the country had ever known," in the words of Alfred Cobban.[44] The conscription law, by the complete failure of nationalist-rightist candidates, had been clearly repudiated.

Albrecht-Carre, Taylor, and others have spoken of this shift away from

40. Gregor, *Italian Fascism and Developmental Dictatorship* (Princeton, 1979), p. 90.
41. Oron Hale, *The Great Illusion, 1900-1914* (New York, 1971), p. 202.
42. *Ibid.*
43. Georges Sorel, *Reflections on Violence* (New York, 1941), p. 78.
44. Alfred Cobban, *A History of Modern France*, Vol. 3 (Middlesex, 1963), p. 104.

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militarism at a time when France, according to von Bulow, "was the only European country in which in certain influential quarters, not in the people, it was justified to talk of 'war fever.' "[45] Prince Lichnowski, German ambassador to England, provided a still more complete picture in a diary entry of April 27: he described the French people's calm and "thoroughly pacifist mood," while noting the difficulties which internal affairs presented to the government.[46]

The April polling "proved," in Cobban's words, "that even in the existing state of international tension French opinion was profoundly pacific and non-aggressive."[47] President Poincare, in June, was forced to appoint a left-wing regime under Viviani. Reversal of the conscription law was the first order of business; nevertheless, the Radical and Socialist deputies agreed not to press for this in exchange for vague promises regarding future passage of an income tax law, an obvious betrayal.

When the war crisis was played out in early August and Juarès, dean of the left, was assassinated by a chauvinist fanatic, it was Viviani who issued the left's call for nationalist unity. At this moment of spontaneous anti-war demonstrations, he announced that, "in the serious circumstances through which our country is passing, the government counts on the patriotism of the working class."

That the proletariat would have been the object of fear is evidenced by its growing militancy. Whereas in the 1890s there had been hundreds of small, local strikes, there were 1,073 in 1913, involving a quarter of a million workers. A good deal of alarm was generated by the scale and persistence of the strikes, seen by many as "symptoms of a profound unrest and social sickness," according to David Thomson.[48] Strikes of postal and telegraph workers in Paris called the loyalty of state employees into question, while agricultural workers' strikes often led to riots and the burning of farm owners' houses.

Radical tendencies on the terrain of work cannot, however, be attributed to prewar syndicalism with much accuracy. Syndicalist ideology proved an attraction for a time, due to revulsion with the dogma of socialist reformism, but there was — according to Stearns and others — no positive correlation between syndicalist leadership and strike violence, for example.[49] In fact, syndicalist leaders had to combat violence and spontaneous strikes just like any other brokers of organized labor. Syndicalist unions served the same integrative function as any others and manifested the same movement toward bureaucratization. It is hardly surprising that after 1910 there was growing talk of a "crisis of syndicalism."

During the first decade of the century, Gustave Hervè's doctrine of total

45. Von Bulow, *op.cit.*, p. 173.
46. Prince Lichnowski, *Heading for the Abyss* (New York, 1928), p. 362.
47. Cobban, *op.cit.*, p. 102.
48. David Thomson, *Democracy in France Since 1870* (Oxford, 1969), p. 174.
49. Peter Stearns, *Revolutionary Syndicalism and French Labor* (Rutgers, 1971), p. 69.

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military insurrection against the officer class became quite popular. Elie Halèvy saw that "no sooner conceived, it spread like wildfire to many countries outside France."[50] He added that on the eve of war it was "still rampant in the rank and file of the French army."[51]

Hervè, editor of *La Guerre Sociale*, had called for revolution as the response to mobilization for war. But increasingly the socialist statesmen, when war came he climaxed his anti-war career by begging to be allowed to serve in the army. Recalling Viviani's pro-war speech over the bier of Juarès, we find a fast evaporation of internationalist verbiage and observe how thin some of this rhetoric had been all along. The young males of the nation marched, leaving behind debasing contradictions of the left with a sense of relief.

By the end of 1916, however, desertions were occurring at a rate estimated at 30,000 a year. Spring 1917 saw wholesale desertion replaced by outright mutiny, causing open panic among the military high command. Whole divisions from the Champagne front were involved, for example, amid cheers for world revolution, for firing on the officers, and for a march on Paris.[52] But exhaustion and a sense of futility, built up of the war's mammoth violence and the long list of confusions and disillusionments that predated the war, were joined by the universal united front of unions and the left, to enforce the war and safeguard class society.

France was the *grant mutilée* of the war: 1,400,000 dead, one of every 24 in the land. Out of all this, not even the postwar parodies of revolution would visit France.

Although the United States stands apart from Europe's traditions and conditions, it is also true that revolution, or its approach, is a world phenomenon as of the era under scrutiny. Taking a very few words' detour, many features paralleling prewar Europe are discernible in the American situation.

Henry May found that "During the prewar years, passion asnd violence seemed to many observers to be rising to the surface in all sorts of inexplicable ways."[53] And as in Europe, organized ideology could not find its vehicle in this upsurge. The tame Socialist Party was ebbing after having reached its peak in 1912, and the I.W.W., syndicalist alternative, failed to have much impact at any point.

The Federal Commission on Industrial Relations, sitting between 1910 and 1915, concluded that unionization was the answer to a violence, in Graham Adams' words, "which threatened the structure of society."[54] This recommendation was hailed by moderate and radical unionists alike,[55] and

50. Halêvy, *op.cit.*, p. 14.
51. *Ibid.*, p. 20.
52. Taylor, *op.cit.*, p. 238.
53. Henry F. May, *The End of American Innocence* (New York, 1959), p. 334.
54. Graham Adams Jr., *The Age of Industrial Violence, 1910-1915* (New York, 1966), p. xii.
55. *Ibid.*, p. 619.

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brings to mind the advice of a few that the I.W.W.'s industrial unionism was the specific brand needed to stabilize American capital relations. In fact, government-sponsored unions established the control apparatus of scientific management, under the War Industries Board, and survived long enough to administer the crucial blows to the three major post-war strikes, those in coal, steel, and Seattle, in 1919.

John Dewey had predicted that the war would introduce "the beginnings of a public control," and defended it thusly as a needed agency of socialization.[56] But America's entry was far from basically popular; Ellul concluded that U.S. participation "could be produced only by the enormous pressure of advertising and total propaganda on the human psyche."[57]

Zeman quotes a far from atypical, if anonymous, historian: "We still don't know, at any level that really matters, why Wilson took the fateful decision to bring the U.S. into the First World War."[58] John Higham provides an acceptable if understated reply: "Perhaps a vigorous assertion of American rights functioned...to submerge the drift and clash of purpose in domestic affairs."[59]

Before examining the two most developed countries, Germany and England, something of the depth of the prewar turmoil — and its pacification — can be seen in even the briefest glimpse at cultural changes.

Stravinsky, whose *Le Sacre du Printemps* virtually incarnated the promise of a new age, remines one that the new music was noticeably supranational in its composition and appeal.[60] Between 1910 and 1914, more precisely, nationalism receded as a force in music, as it had in other fields as well. In painting, the movement toward pure abstraction emerged simultaneously and independently in several countries during the five years preceding the war.[61] Cubism, with its urgent re-examination of reality, was the most important element of the modern school and by far the most audacious to date — notwithstanding the frequent and entertaining accusation, in Roger Shattuck's words, that it was "an enormous hoax dreamed up by the hashish-smoking, pistol-carrying, half-starved inhabitants of Monmartre."[62]

Alfred Jarry's nihilistic anarchism, especially in his *Ubu* plays, constituted a one-man demolition squad, over a decade before Dada.[63] In Appolinaire, the new freedom and urgency in poetry, especially in French poetry, is obvious. Apollinaire, however, can also be viewed as an art-historical metaphor: having reached his height from 1912 to 1914, he volunteered in 1914 and was wounded in 1916. His passion and spontaneity were drained away, replaced

56. Christopher Lasch, *The New Radicalism in America, 1889-1963* (New York, 1965), pp. 202-203.
57. Jacques Ellul, *The Technological Society* (New York, 1967), pp. 365-366.
58. Zeman, *op.cit.*, p. 162.
59. John Higham, *Strangers in the Land* (New York, 1968), p. 195.
60. Hale, *op.cit.*, p. 163.
61. *Ibid.*, p. 153.
62. Roger Shattuck, *The Banquet Years* (New York, 1967), p. 283.
63. *Ibid.*, p. 279.

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by patriotism and a sense of artistic discipline; he died of his head wound in the last month of the war, November 1918. Appolinaire recalls vividly the condition of Jake in Hemingway's *The Sun Also Rises*, emasculated by the war.

Shortly before the war, a group of young players, eventually known as the "hypermodern" school, revivified chess in practice and principle, as exemplified most brazenly by Breyer's "After 1.P-K4, White's game is in the last throes."[64] This arcane case aims at underlining the point throughout culture, in every area, an unmistakable daring, a straining at limits was underway. "More freedom, more frankness, more spontaneity had been regained [in the decade before 1914] than in the previous hundred years," as Stefan Zweig looked back on it.[65]

The war drew a terrible dividing line across the advance of all this. The first battle cry of Dada in 1916 was already really the end of it, and the modernist movement of the 1920s acted out a drama conceived, dedicated and developed before the war.

The most anti-bourgeois moments of futurism, all of which were certainly prewar, prefigured Dada in content and also stylistically (e.g., the use of incendiary manifestos). "In postwar Dada, the Futurist enthusiasm had been pacified, ironized and introverted," according to R.W. Flint.[66]

Shattuck mentions the "disintegrating social order" and a "sporty proletarian truculence" inspired by the avant-garde.[67] The lines of inspiration and energy were probably flowing, most importantly, the other way around but the connection itself is valid.

In H.G. Wells' *Joan and Peter* the younger working class generation is described as "bored by the everlasting dullness and humbug of it all."[68] If Paul Ricoeur could ask, over 50 years later, "if there is not, in the present day unrest of culture, something of which answers correlatively to the fundmanetal unrest in contemporary work,"[69] his question also fits the earlier world perfectly. For that previous unrest of work, the technological speedup of 1914-18 gave the answer; the "struggle against idiosyncrasy," toward completely standardized tools and tasks, received its final, critical impetus from the war.[70] "The time of full mechanization, 1918-1939," to use Siegfried Giedion's phrase,[71] was inaugurated.

Getting back to culture, a revolution of art forms gave clear testimony to the social crisis — not that the revolt against the rule of forms was always confined there.

German expressionism, a pinnacle of prewar cultural revolt, aimed not

64. Harry Golumbek, *The Game of Chess* (London, 1954), p. 222.
65. Zweig, *op.cit.*, p. 195.
66. R.W. Flint, ed., *Marinetti* (New York, 1972), p. 14.
67. Shattuck, *op.cit.*, p. 353.
68. Discussed by Carolyn E. Playne, *The Neuroses of Nations* (London, 1925), p. 49.
69. Paul Ricoeur, *History and Truth* (Evanston, 1965), p. 213.
70. David Landes, *The Unbound Prometheus* (London, 1969), p. 316.
71. Siegfried Giedion, *Mechanization Takes Command* (New York, 1969), p. 41.

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only at shattering conventions but at the construction of a "utopian order, or disorder, believed to be freer and more life-enhancing than any to be found in the advanced industrial world just then approaching a new height of development," in the judgment of Hilton Kramer.[72]

The aspirations and innocence of these revolutionary artists were cruelly destroyed by the war. In its aftermath, the bitter expressionist protests of Georg Grosz and Otto Dix bespoke the shock and disillusionment, as with the surrealist nightmares of Dali. Literature is another example of the same result: Eliot, Joyce, Pound, Yeats and so many others — without exception, it appears, prophets of decay and death.

The authoritarian welfare state of Bismarck, several decades from its inception by the prewar years, enforced a state of affairs in Germany which was far from secure. The Eulenburg scandal, in two years of trials after 1907, aired intrigue, blackmail and rottenness in the Kaiser's immediate circle, causing state prestige to sink. Ballin, the Hamburg capitalist, spoke to the government in 1908 of "the growing domestic crisis," hoping that a tax decrease might help defuse it.[73] Already in March 1909 was the war alternative proposed, as Lyncker, chief of the military Cabinet, considered an "external conflict desirable" to move the nation out of internal difficulties.[74]

Prince von Bulow recalled "a general disgruntlement," which he summarized in this way: "If in Bismarck's day people talked of 'disgust with the Empire,' it was now a case of 'disgust with the government' — a 'disgust' which gained ground every day."[75] More specifically portentous was this high-placed opinion, also from his memoirs: "At the end of 1912 I heard from Düsseldorf that Kirdorf, one of the biggest Rheinish industrialists...• had declared that if this goes on another three years Germany will have landed in war or revolution."[76]

In late 1913 and early 1914, the arrogant gestures of German officers against civilizations in Alsace constituted the "Zabern Incidents," and aroused, in Carolyn Playne's words, "general indignation."[77] Indeed, a great outcry went up and the Reichstag voted, albeit somewhat impotently, a 293-54 no-confidence resolution. James Gerard saw this as an occasion of waning government power, and wrote that the German people seemed "to be almost ready to demilitarize themselves."[78]

To John Flynn, the Zabern hubub merely contributed to the deepening of a domestic split which had already virtually paralyzed the country. As he

72. Hilton Kramer, "German Expressionism," *San Francisco Examiner-Chronicle*, October 12, 1980.
73. Berghahn, *op.cit.*, p. 78.
74. *Ibid.*, p. 81.
75. Von Bulow, *op.cit.*, p. 103.
76. *Ibid.*, p. 102.
77. Playne, *op.cit.*, p. 88.
78. James Gerard, *My Four Years in Germany* (New York, 1917), p. 75. Gerard saw the popular reaction to the Zabern incidents as "perhaps the final factor which decided the advocates of the old military system of Germany in favor of a European war" (p. 91).

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viewed it, "There was a spirit — and a growing one — of resistance to arbitrary tendencies."[79] In this context the naval indiscipline aboard the S.S. Vaterland at Auxhaven in the spring of 1914 is similarly revealing. There the bold, spontaneous action of the 1,300 crew forced an immediate and unconditional acceptance of their demands, recalling the revolt in the Brazilian navy of late 1910.

Arthur Rosenberg described the political and social tensions of Germany as "typical of a prerevolutionary period," concluding that without war in 1914, "the conflict between the Imperial government and the majority of the German nation would have continued to intensify to a point at which a revolutionary situation would have been created."[80] Chancellor Bethmann-Hollweg on the eve of war complained of the absence of nationalist fortitude in the land, lamenting this as a "decline of values," and a "spiritual degeneration." Complaining further of what he saw as the ruling classes' "solicitude for every current of public opinion," he defined his war policy to Riezler as a necessary "leap into the dark and the heaviest duty."[81]

At the same time, it is rather clear that this rising crisis, requiring the war to stem it, was not at all the doing of the left. Of the Social Democrats and their millions of adherents a hollowness was manifest. D.A. Smart wrote of the "widely felt stagnation in the party"[82] in 1913; Spengler, in the introduction to his *Decline of the West,* saw both the approaching world war and a "great crisis...in Socialism." Far from inconceivable, then, is the notion that the rulers feared a breakdown of their dependable official adversaries, not the party or unions themselves, especially given the signs of uncontrolled movement.

Industrial anger, in the shipyards, for example, was on the upswing and was most often directly combatted by the unions. The alienation of trade union membership, which was to characterize the latter part of the war, was strongly developing: local groups were breaking away from the central confederations in textiles, paint and metals.[83]

The Social Democratic Party, a function of the trade unions, was a loyal handmaiden of the state; its support of government tax bills made possible the military alternative, guaranteeing a harvest of proletarian cynicism. In 1914, Austin Harrison put it another way: "All kinds of men, German bankers, for example, often voted for the Socialists."[84] The workers' penchant for "sudden, unorganized" strikes, which has puzzled many commentators, underlined the contradiction and its threat.

During July, various Party leaders met with Bethmann-Hollweg, enabling him to reassure the Prussian Ministry of State on July 30 of the left's abject

79. John T. Flynn, *As We Go Marching* (New York, 1973), p. 81.
80. Arthur Rosenberg, *Imperial Germany* (New York, 1970), p. 58.
81. Gordon Craig, *Germany, 1866-1945* (New York, 1978), p. 337.
82. D.A. Smart, *Pannekoek and Gorter's Marxism* (New York, 1977), p. 20.
83. *Ibid.*, p. 21.
84. Austin Harrison, *The Kaiser's War* (London, 1914), p. 197.

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loyalty: "There would be no talk of a general strike or of sabotage."[85] Utilizing the socialist tradition of defending war by advanced powers against less developed ones as progressive, 'opposition' and government were in agreement on anti-czarism as the effective public banner.

While making plans for preserving the Party machinery, Social Democracy voted unanimously for war credits on August 4, with an accompanying statement which stressed imperialism as inevitably generating war and explicitly refused any responsibility for the war. Robert Looker aptly termed this "a depth of political and moral bankruptcy...of such enormity that it went far beyond the crimes of particular leaders or parties."[86]

Rosa Luxemburg in early 1915 wrote that "the collapse itself is without precedent in the history of all times."[87] But it is interesting that she upheld the war (as legitimized by its enemy of autocratic Russia) for literally years until public pressure was overwhelmingly against it; similarly, she was neither in the lead of the rising of November 1918, which released her from prison, or of the Spartacist revolt, which she grudgingly backed. The Social Democrats — and the unions — were co-responsible with the army for managing the war effort in general. Their police role most importantly was the investiture of all the military authorities' security measures with a fading aura of 'socialism,' toward the prevention of popular uprisings. When Luxemburg wrote in 1916 that "The world war has decimated the results of 40 years' work of European socialism,"[88] it would have been far more accurate to say that war revealed those results. And as if this role, in bringing on and protecting the process, were not enough, the Social Democrats, as the effective agency of state power surviving the war, drowned the abortive postwar rebellions in blood. Of course, the road to new horrors was wide open. As Lukacs recorded, "I witnessed the rise of fascism in Germany and I know very well that very many young people at that time adhered to fascism out of a sincere indignation at the capitalist system."[89]

Returning for a moment to the actual arrival of war, there was indeed a sincere "indignation" reigning in 1914. Part of this was a nihilist dissatisfaction by many of ruling class backgrounds. Hannah Arendt detected, among those most permeated with the ideological outlook and standards of the bourgeoisie, a common absorption with "the desire to see the ruin of this whole world of fake security, fake culture, and fake life."[90] Ernst Junger expressed an exuberant hope that everything the elite knew, the whole culture and texture of life, might go down in "storms of steel."[91]

At the brink there was a certain relief, as well, caused by the decision itself.

85. James Joll, *The Second International* (New York. 1956), pp. 166-167.
86. Robert Looker, ed., *Rosa Luxemburg: Selected Political Writings* (New York, 1972), p. 40.
87. *Ibid.*, p. 197.
88. *Ibid.*, p. 222.
89. Theo Pinkus, ed., *Conversations with Lukacs* (Cambridge, 1975), p. 148.
90. Hannah Arendt, *Totalitarianism* (New York, 1968), p. 26.
91. Quoted by Arendt, *ibid.*

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War gave a release to the exhausted nerves caused by the tension of weeks of waiting — followed, commonly, soon afterward by a confused despair.[92]

In October 1914, the diary of Rudolf Bindung, a young cavalry officer, already contained virtually the whole lesson of the war: "An endless reproach to mankind. . . everything becomes senseless, a lunacy, a horrible back joke of peoples and their history. . . . It was the end of happy endings in life as in art."[93]

Never before, and nowhere more so than in England, had power — economic, political, administrative, military — achieved such a high degree of consolidation. Yet at this apogee its actual fragility was becoming palpable, in the tendency, in England and across Europe, toward unfettered and unpredictable mass opposition. That there existed a widespread challenge to the cohesion and integrity of nationalist states is unmistakable.

The crises since 1909 regarding North Africa and the Balkans, above all, have been mentioned; 'foreign affairs' progressed into a much closer parallel to its 'domestic' counterpart; with a much larger qualitative diversion finally needed to transcend the mounting social disharmony. The Agadir, Morocco, crisis of July and August 1911 exemplifies this development. During the seamen and dockers' strike, which was marked by unprecedented violence, especially in the ports of Liverpool and London, the arrival of the German gunboat *Panther* in Agadir became the occasion for growing official furor. When railway workers joined the strike, troops were called out and fighting ensued. The clash at home was settled on emergency terms, thanks to the Moroccan issue. Thereafter, domestic industrial warfare and foreign crises both seemed to grow with equal intensity.

Another area of outbreak in England was a reaction to bourgeois suffocation, as seen in the strange physical fury of the votes for women cause. The made fortitude exhibited by feminists in the period 1910-1914 — including pitched battles with police, and arson of cricket pavilions, racetrack grandstands, and resort hotels — certainly belied the utterly tame objective of female suffrage, an obvious reason for characterizing of the movement as an outlet for suppressed energy. Reverent Joseph Bibby wrote of the suffragettes, "who set fire to our ancient churches and noble mansions, and who go about our art galleries with hammers up their sleeves to destroy valuable works of art." Having felt this explosion and the growing proletarian resolve, Bibby in 1915 welcomed the "chastening" effects of the war on these passions.[94]

The prewar Edwardian epoch was an age of violence wherein, according to Dangerfield, "fires long smoldering in the English spirit suddenly flared, so that by the end of 1913, Liberal England was reduced to ashes."[95] The

92. Hanna Hafkesbrink, *Unknown Germany: An Inner Chronicle* (New Haven, 1948), pp. 30-32.

93. Reginald Pound, *The Lost Generation* (New York, 1964), p. 73.

94. Joseph Bibby, *The War, Its Unseen Cause and Some of Its Lessons* (London, 1915), p. 12.

95. George Dangerfield, *The Strange Death of Liberal England* (New York, 1961), p. viii.

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memoirs of Emanuel Shinwell also testify to this quickening time: "The discontent of the masses spread, the expression of millions of ordinary people who had gained little or nothing from the Victorian age of industrial expansion and grandiose imperialism." [96]

The seeding time of 1914, in its ferment and fertility, seemed more than ripe for increasingly radical directions. R.C.K. Ensor felt that an undistracted concentration upon home issues may well have brought a revolution, especially, he thought, as reflected by the "prewar loss of balance about home rule."[97]

The social and parliamentary impasse over self-determination for Ireland — whether it should encompass the whole of the country or exclude Ulster in the north — boiled over in the summer of 1914. The south was ready to fight for a united Irish home rule, the loyalty of English troops was crumbling, and it looked, to R.J. Evans, for instance, "as if Britain was at last breaking up through her own weakness and dissension."[98]

Colin Cross wrote, appropos of the crisis over Ireland — and the industrial strife and suffrage violence as well — that "Had there been no European war in Summer 1914, Britain might well have lapsed into...anarchy." As Irish workers and peasants moved toward revolt, a divided England appeared "nearer to civil war than at any time since the 16th century," according to Cross.[99]

The whole English party system began to founder at the time of the Irish dilemma, especially given the split in the army. James Cameron summed up this moment with some eloquence: "From a hundred obscure places in Britain, from small-time barbers and ice-cream dealers and Diplomatic Secreatires the message went back to the European Foreign offices: the United Kingdom, if you could call it such, is riddled with dissension; indeed, there is the considerable likelihood of civil war."[100]

Harold Nicolson saw the background of the industrial upheavals of 1910-1914, with its unfolding "revolutionary spirit," as creating veritable panic among the upper classes; this "incessant labor unrest" plus the home rule clash brought the country, in his view, "to the bring of civil war."[101]

Plainly, class tensions were becoming unbearable, "too great to be contained in the existing social and world setting," in the words of Arthur Marwick.[102] In 1911 William Archer had conjectured that some "great catastrophe might be necessary for a new, viable world social order."[103] For England, as elsewhere, the whirlpool of contestation had grown critically

96. Emanuel Shinwell, *I've Lived Through It All* (London, 1973), p. 12.
97. R.C.K. Ensor, *England, 1870-1914* (Oxford, 1936), p. 557.
98. R.J. Evans, *The Victorian Age* (London, 1950), p. 46.
99. Colin Cross, *The Liberals in Power, 1905-1914* (London, 1963), p. 171.
100. James Cameron, *1914* (New York, 1959), p. 21.
101. Harold Nicolson, *King George the Fifth* (London, 1952), p. 163.
102. Arthur Marwick, *The Deluge: British Society and the First World War* (Boston, 1966), p. 10.
103. William Archer, *The Great Analysis* (London, 1911), p. 19.

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turbulent over the four years leading up to mid-summer 1914. "The cry of civil war is on the lips of the most responsible and sober-minded of my people," George V warned participants of a Buckingham Palace conference on July 21, 1914.[104]

Indeed, it can be argued that to look more closely at the attitudes assembling the social crisis is to see nothing less than a nascent refusal against the whole miasma of modern organizational mediation.

A major social welfare enactment, for example, the National Insurance Act of 1911, served only to increase the discontent of the laboring classes.[105] And it was this act that accounted for growth in the trade unions, as the union bureaucracies provided functionaries needed for its administration. More distance from the workers, a greater closeness between unions and government. A 1912 bill proposing to greatly extend the franchise met with universal indifference.[106]

The Labor Party, voice of the unions and proponent of social legislation, likewise struck no chord with the populace; owing largely to the repulsion its bureaucratic nature evoked among the young especially, it engendered no enthusiasm at all.

But the voracious appetites at large could be clearly seen in the many major labor battles from 1910 on — and in their propensity for arson, looting, and violence, as well as the strong preponderance of unauthorized, anti-contract wildcat work stoppages. Halèvy saw the unrest as "verging at times on anarchy," and determined that it was a "revolt not only against the authority of capital but against the discipline of trade unions"[107] — as if union discipline was not an essential element of capital's authority.

By 1912, syndicalism, and its close cousin, guild socialism, were attracting much attention. But popular excitement was actually a bit more elusive, not surprising since these projections, staffed by union officials and based on union structures, were all but indistinguishable from industrial unionism itself.

Unexceptionally, English unions, too, were strengthened by the war, but worker rebellions managed to continue, against high odds. The whole summer of 1916, for instance, featured much resistance throughout the provinces in England and along the Clyde to the north. By this time, and versus the disabling wartime array of forces, the struggles were not only against the state and the employers but especially in opposition to the union administrations. New mediation was called for and provided by the shop steward movement of union reform, a diversion esssential to the containment of the workers. The Whitely Councils, a form of co-determination which increasingly emphasized the role of unions, was another wartime development

104. Zara S. Steiner, *Britain and the Origins of the First World War* (New York, 1977), p. 153.
105. Elie Halèvy, *A History of the English People, 1905-1915* (London, 1934), p. 457.
106. *Ibid.*, p. 436.
107. *Ibid.*, pp. 446, 451.

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aimed against proletarian autonomy. The parliamentary committees at work on a council formula recognized that the constant strife was the doing of the "undisciplined," not the unions. They "wanted to find a cure for the malaise that, before the war, had every year weighted more heavily on industry, and, in consequence, on all of English politics."[108]

A "Triple Alliance" among the miners', transport workers', and railwaymen's unions was formed during the spring and summer of 1914, leading not a few to the prediction that a general strike would have occurred in the fall, but for the war, as the culmination of the strike wave. This thesis totally confuses the official enemies of domination with its real ones.

In fact, the strikes were definitely not initiated by union leaders, architects of the Alliance, but in every case broke out locally and unofficially. The Alliance was not, according to G.A. Phillips, "a concession to the pressures of rank and file militancy; on the contrary, it was designed specifically to control and discipline such militancy." Union officials forged the new structure out of an immediate and overriding need to avert work actions, not facilitate them. Its constitution proclaimed that "every effort shall proceed among the three sections to create effective and complete control of the respective bodies."[109]

Concerning the actual arrival of war, even as the axe began to fall, "Nobody was 'for' the war, or cared at least to be expressly held to be so, and great numbers were urgently and articulately against it," in the judgment of Cameron.[110] Reginald Pound grasped the groundwork for the event: "Probably for the considerable part of the male population the war came, above all, as a relief from pointless labor, one of the major and possibly most dangerous discontents of 20th-century civilization."[111]

World War I canonized the daily misery of the modern world, presenting its apotheosis of authority and technology most precisely in terms of work. Carl Zuckmayer's experience as a soldier summed up power's universal message that work is all: "the monstrous boredom, the exhaustion, the unheroic, mechanical day-to-day of war in which terror, fear, and death are inserted like the striking of a timeclock in an endless industrial process."[112]

In a world where the spectacle of opposition nowhere seriously asserted the abolition of wage-labor and its context, this frontal assault was as possible as it was necessary. The prewar revolution was smashed. It took 50 years for the recovery to begin.

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108. Elie Halèvy, *The Era of Tyrannies* (Garden City, N.Y., 1965), p. 106.
109. G.A. Phillips, "The Triple Industrial Alliance in 1914," *Economic History Review*, XXIV:1 (1971), p. 63.
110. Cameron, *op.cit.*, p. 46.
111. Pound, *op.cit.*, p. 28.
112. Quoted in Eric J. Leed's "Class and Disillusionment in World War I," *Journal of Modern History*, 50 (December 1978), p. 691.

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FEMINISM AND THE INTERNATIONALS

by Joan Landes

Since the late 19th century, when Marxism achieved hegemony within the labor movement, the debate between feminists and socialists has turned on the Marxist formulation of the "woman problem."[1] Now socialist feminism proposes a reversal of roles — the problem to be considered is that of Marxism itself. Socialist feminism has made a final break with the vision of the women's movement as the ladies' auxiliary of the union, party, or council. It refuses the notion of an undifferentiated, universal revolutionary subject. The divorce that some have proposed as a means to end the unhappy marriage of feminism and socialism has time and again been granted.[2] Certainly, feminism cannot be reduced to a movement to restructure the workplace or reorganize the state. Neither can it subscribe to the myth that solidarity is only a myth.

Although there is no public record of Marx's precise attitude toward feminism, as late as 1868 he wrote in a letter that "major social transformations were impossible without ferment from women."[3] This conviction was widely shared by early nineteenth century socialists who aimed to build a movement of equality and cooperation between men and women. However, by the time of the Second International, the working class movement was beset by tensions between men and women.[4] Two of the most heatedly debated issues of this period were female suffrage and protective legislation; the former largely a feminist demand which received strong socialist endorsement, the latter a socialist position.[5] In Germany August Bebel, the author of the

1. See Alfred G. Meyer, "Marxism and the Women's Movement" in *Women in Russia*, Dorothy Atkinson, Alexander Dallin and Gail Warshofsky, editors (Stanford, 1978), pp. 85-112; M. Jane Slaughter, "Feminism and Socialism," *Marxist Perspectives*, 2:3 (Fall 1979), pp. 32-49; Sheila Rowbotham, "The Women's Movement and Organizing for Socialism," *Radical America*, 13:5 (September-October 1979), pp. 9-28; Allen Hunter and Linda Gordon, "Feminism, Leninism and the U.S.: A Comment," *Radical America*, 13:5 (September-October 1979), pp. 29-36; Lise Vogel, "Questions on the Woman Question," *Monthly Review*, 31:2 (June 1979), pp. 39-59.

2. See Heidi I. Hartmann, "The Unhappy Marriage of Marxism and Feminism: Towards a More Progressive Union" in *Women and Revolution*, Lydia Sargent, editor (Boston, 1979); and Batya Weinbaum, *The Curious Courtship of Women's Liberation and Socialism* (Boston, 1978).

3. Letter to Kugelman, December 12, 1868, cited in Stites, *The Women's Liberation Movement in Russia* (Princeton, 1978), p. 235.

4. Cf. Werner Thönnessen, *The Emancipation of Women: The Rise and Decline of the Women's Movement in German Social Democracy 1863-1933* (London, 1969).

5. There is still debate whether or not protective legislation is a "feminist" issue. There is no question, however, that those who defended working class women's rights in the early 20th century considered protective legislation to be a women's issue. They attacked the bourgeois feminist "abstract" approach to women's needs, abhorring bourgeois feminists' defense of women's right to work in a labor market characterized by structured inequality. They also argued that the bourgeois feminist position overlooked the unequal burden borne by married working class women workers in the home as well as the workplace (something that single professional women did not suffer). Thus, class as well as family status divided bourgeois from socialist feminists in this period. The debate over protective legislation reveals these divisions.

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popular treatise *Women and Socialism,* sparred with the anti-feminist Lassallean faction of the Social Democratic Party. In his *Critique of the Gotha Programme,* Marx disregards this internal SPD debate. He makes no mention of the draft article calling for "universal, equal and direct suffrage by secret ballot for all males who have reached the age of 21,"[6] ignoring the fact that his omission could have been interpreted as tacit support for deferring the battle over female suffrage to a later date.[7] In fact, the resolution finally adopted at Gotha involved a compromise on suffrage, demanding equal and direct suffrage for all citizens. While omitting any explicit mention of women, the resolution permitted their inclusion under the concept of citizen. Marx also accepts the principle of restricting female labor, especially from branches of industry unhealthy for the female body or morally objectionable for the female sex. In contrast, he pronounces that the prohibition of child labor is either impossible to achieve under large-scale industry or reactionary since "an early combination of productive labor with education is one of the most potent means for the transformation of present-day society."[8] In other words, like his contemporaries who supported restrictions on female labor and protested against instances of "morally objectionable" work situations for women, Marx succumbs to attitudes more compatible with bourgeois morality on the subject of women than with his own theory of the levelling effects of capitalistic industrialization.[9]

The demand for protective legislation was popular among socialists at the turn of the century but opposed by feminists as a restriction on women's freedom and equality in the job market. In a cruel reversal, although such legislation did protect women from the most excessive abuses of a capitalist work environment, it had the further effect of imposing upon working class women a self-image tied to domesticity, subordination, and non-participation in political life. It also served to protect male interests (against women) within the paid labor force.[10] Marx and Engels, like most socialists of their age, failed to recognize the limits of this demand. Their shortened vision was only accentuated by the growing hostility of socialists toward middle-class feminist movements. Socialists began to defend protective legislation as a class issue.

6. Editors's note 261 to Karl Marx, "Critique of the Gotha Programme," in Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *Selected Works,* David McLellan, editor (Oxford, 1977), pp. 315-335; p. 737.

7. This was the position of the Austrian Social Democratic Party who deferred the battle for female suffrage until after securing working class male suffrage; thus setting them apart from the large majority of Social Democratic parties. Universal manhood suffrage was won in Austria in 1907; thereafter the Austrian party's women's organization focused on the suffrage, seeing it as a key to all other reforms. See: Richard Evans, *The Feminists: Women's Emancipation Movements in Europe, America and Australasia 1840-1920* (New York, 1977), pp. 166-168.

8. Marx, "Critique of the Gotha Programme," in *Selected Works, op.cit.,* p. 334.

9. It is worth noting the curious contradiction between Marx's views on female and child labor. After all, when he penned his response, the abuses of child labor were an open scandal, yet Marx seems to find something beneficial, or at least "necessary" in it. If Marx succumbs to bourgeois morality on the subject of women, we might want to consider whether this flows from a deep attachment to Victorian attitudes on family life and women, as well as from the structure of his own ambivalent arguments on the character of capitalist family life.

10. Cf. Thönnessen, *The Emancipation of Women, op.cit.*; Dorothy Thompson, "Women

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Organizationally, it offered a convenient compromise between those who defended women's right to work and those who wished to restrict female labor in the name of a conventionally-conceived proletarian family life. Engels resorts to this class-bound perspective in a letter to the German feminist Gertrud Guillaume-Schack. He writes that it is necessary to qualify the feminist demand for equal pay in order to protect the "health of the future generations," a more important concern than the "absolute formal equality of the sexes during the last years of the capitalistist mode of production." Although Engels reaffirms a socialist commitment to "equal wages for equal work to either sex," he draws an important line between socialist and feminist strategy: "The English women who championed the formal right of members of their sex to permit themselves to be as thoroughly exploited by the capitalists as the men, are mostly, directly or indirectly, interested in the capitalistic exploitation of both sexes."[11]

The position with which Engels brands these English feminists approximates Marx's and Engels' own view of the general logic of capital as the foundation for the universal character of the proletarian movement: To abolish all differences among persons and to eradicate all privileges among groups in time. In the *Manifesto* they write: "As the labor of men is superseded by that of women," differences of age and sex cease to have any further social validity for the working class; all workers are reduced to "instruments of labor, more or less expensive to use, according to their age and sex." "The various interests and conditions of life within the ranks of the proletariat are more and more equalized, in proportion as machinery obliterates all distinction of labor, and nearly everywhere reduces wages to the same low level." As a result of these tendencies, they conclude: "All previous historical movements were movements of minorities, or in the interests of minorities. The proletarian movement is the self-conscious, independant movement of the immense majority, in the interests of the majority."[12]

Like Marx, Engels endorses the notion that the economic struggle should be awarded priority over the social and sexual struggle. In Marx's words, "...with the abolition of class distinctions all social and political inequalities from them would disappear of itself.[13] The implication for strategy is that there is absolutely no justification for an autonomous women's movement within the socialist party.

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and Nineteenth Century Radical Politics" in *The Rights and Wrongs of Women* (London, 1976), and Heide Hartmann, "Capitalism, Patriarchy and Job Segregation by Sex" in *Capitalist Patriarchy and the Case for Socialist Feminism*, Zillah Eisenstein, ed. (New York, 1979), pp. 206-247.

11. Letter to Gertrud Guillame-Schack in Beuthen (London, July 5, 1885), in Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *Selected Correspondence* (Moscow, 1975); also cited in Alfred G. Meyer, "Marxism and the Women's Movement" in *Women in Russia, op.cit.*

11. Letter to Gertrud Guillaume-Schack in Beuthen (London, July 5, 1885 in Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *Selected Correspondance* (Moscow, 1975); also cited in Alfred G. Meyer, "Marxism and the Women's Movement" in *Women in Russia, op. cit.* Despite Engels' private reservations, socialist parties generally came to support the demand for equal pay.

12. Marx and Engels, "The Communist Manifesto," in *Selected Works, op.cit.*, p. 45.

13. Marx, "Critique of the Gotha Programme," in *Selected Works, op. cit.*, p. 329

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Finally, Engels' remarks to Guillaume-Schack reveal one other unfortunate theme which became more pronounced in the thought of later Marxists. Engels emphasizes women's "special physiological functions," assuming uncritically the fact of women's primary responsibility for childcare. Like the majority of his age, Engels never questions the effect of socially structured gender differences, even though his insights into the social relations of reproduction might have led him further in this direction. He implies that women's mothering role is an unchangeable aspect of the division of labor. He never considers whether men can also mother children. Public house-keeping — the socialization of domestic work rather than the transformation to the sexual division of labor — became the major solution to women's domestic oppression within the international social democratic and communist movements. In this prescription, there is no recognition of the need to wage a conscious struggle to transform interpersonal relatons.

Engels' conservatism on these questions is not unique.[14] Only on the periphery of Marxist movements do we discover individuals firmly committed to the project of sexual liberation.[15] Within the mainstream, free love was often abhorred and, for women, childbearing was prescribed as an essential function of sex and love. The notion of "maternal instinct" was interpreted by many to affirm that women, no matter what other activities they might perform in the revolutionary movement, have a duty to become mothers.[16] Lenin, for example, regarded sexual liberation as a bourgeois fixation — a prejudice open to accomodation with the doctrines of the sexual counterrevolution in the Stalinist years. In a conversation recounted after his death by Clara Zetkin, Lenin is reported to have argued against all sex theories, including Freud's, as a personal indulgence characteristic of bourgeois decadence. He attributes the superabundance of sex theories as springing from:

"The desire to justify one's own abnormal or excessive sex life before bourgeois morality and to plead for tolerance for oneself. This veiled respect for bourgeois morality is as repugnant to me as rooting about in all that bears on

14. For a Victorian male, Engels held advanced views on love, marriage and sexuality. For a comparison with Marx, see Meyer, "Marxism and the Women's Movement" in *Women in Russia, op. cit.*; and Yvonne Kapp, *Eleanor Marx: Volumes One and Two* (New York, 1972 and 1976)

15. Still, throughout the nineteenth century and even in the crucial period 1890-1920 socialists were the leading figures in the struggle for sexual liberation. For an examination of those lesser known socialists who were committed to sexual emancipation, see: Sheila Rowbotham and Jeffrey Weeks, *Socialism and the New Life: The Personal and Sexual Politics of Edward Carpenter and Havelock Ellis* (London, 1977); Sheila Rowbotham, *A New World For Women* (London, 1977); *Selected Writings of Alexandra Kollontai*, trans. Alex Holt (London, 1977); Barbara Clements, *Bolshevik Feminist: The Life of Aleksandra Kollontai* (Bloomington, 1979); Alexandra Kollontai, *Love of Worker Bees*, trans. Cathy Porter (London, 1977); Alexandra Kollontai, *The Autobiography of a Sexually Emancipated Woman*, trans. Salvator Attansio, (New York, 1971); Anne Bobroff, "Alexandra Kollontai: Feminism, Workers' Democracy, and Internationalism," *Radical America*, 13:6 (November-December 1979), pp. 51-75; Cathy Porter, *Alexandra Kollontai: A Biography* (London, 1980); Beatrice Farnsworth, *Aleksandra Kollontai: Socialism, Feminism and the Bolshevik Revolution* (Stanford, 1980).

16. Pudovkin's film "The Mother," completed during the early years of the Bolshevik revolution, is an excellent document of the socialist reverence for the figure of the mother.

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sex. No matter how rebellious and revolutionary it may be made to appear, it is in the final analysis thoroughly bourgeois. Intellectuals and others like them are particularly keen on this. *There is no room for it in the Party, among the class-conscious, fighting proletariat.*"[17]

Lenin unabashedly chastises Zetkin for the "deviations" practiced by the German Communist Party's women's movement: he attacks its organizational work among prostitutes (counterposed by Lenin to more important efforts with industrial working women) and attacks discussion groups among working women on topics of sex and marriage. When reminded of the theoretical status of the latter questions in classical Marxism, Lenin patronizingly demands that Zetkin reassure him "in all sincerity that during those reading and discussion evenings, questions of sex and marriage are dealt with from the point of view of mature, vital historical materialism," which, he adds, "presupposes wide-ranging, profound knowledge, and the fullest Marxist mastery of a vast amount of material." Lenin implies that these German women do not have the necessary expertise for such an analysis; as evidence he refers to their reading of an "inadequate and un-Marxist" view of the problem "because sex and marriage problems are not treated as only part of the main social problem. Conversely, the main social problem is presented as a part, an appendage to the sex problem. The important point recedes into the background. Thus not only is this question obscured, but also thought, and the class-consciousness of working women in general, is dulled."[18] Lenin didactically concludes that this is not the time to keep "working women busy for months at a stretch with such questions as how to love and be loved, how to woo or to be wooed... Nowadays all the thoughts of Communist women, of working women, should be centred on the proletarian revoluton, which will lay the foundation, among other things, for the necessary revision of material and sexual relations." Significantly, despite her lively defense of the work of

17. "Lenin on the Woman Question by Clara Zetkin," appendix to *The Emancipation of Women: From the Writings of V.I. Lenin*, preface Nadezhda K. Krupskaya (New York, 1966); pp. 95-123; p. 101 (my emphasis). Lenin's infamous remarks on free love, popularized in the "glass-of-water theory" which he repudiated, are well known. Kollontai, the supposed author of this theory, though not named in this interview with Zetkin, was widely understood to be the object of his attack. In a similar vein, Lenin objects to the discussion of sexuality in German youth organizations. He views the subject as "dangerous and damaging" to the movement, possibly leading to "sexual excesses, to over-stimulation of sex life and to wasted health and strength of young people." He recommends sports as a substitute activity and advises that Communist women should redirect these youths toward other goals; a "continuation of motherhood, (which) will elevate it and extend it from the individual to the social sphere," thereby overcoming its philistine, individualized form in the private family. See *Ibid.*, p. 104. Apart from the strong parallels to be drawn here between Lenin's views on sexuality and those of his bourgeois "opponents", it is worth emphasizing that the role which he defines for working class women — to guide, supervise or redirect youthful attention in an acceptable way — is precisely the role which nineteenth century social philanthropists and bourgeois feminists advanced for women of the working class. Compare: Jacques Donzelot, *The Policing of Families*, trans. Robert Hurley (New York, 1979).

18. *The Emancipation of Women, op.cit.*, pp. 102-103. Zetkin's report should be considered in the context of growing attention to sexual matters by the German Left and the homosexual emancipation movement in the 1920s. The decade climaxes in the birth of Wilhelm Reich's Sex-Pol movement.

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the German women's movement in this conversation, Zetkin finally accepts Lenin's criticisms. She notes that from then on "sex and marriage were no longer the focal point in lectures at discussion evenings."[19] She seems oblivious to his condescending attitude toward working women's theoretical and intellectual abilities, or to his rigid assertion of political priorities in defiance of women's expressed need for a forum in which to discuss matters of personal life. Zetkin's response is doubly important for she was the leading figure in social democray and later communism. Along with Lenin and Alexandra Kollontai, she helped to shape the attitude of socialists toward feminism, and the course taken by socialist women's organizations.

At a time of serious proposals by a vocal minority within the socialist movement for the birth strike as a tactic in the class struggle, Zetkin opposed abortion as an attack on the working class.[20] She countered the demand for birth control with the argument that it benefited the individual but hurt the class. She viewed the success of the proletarian revolution in strategic terms, as a problem of the numerical balance of forces. She therefore believed that birth control would literally reduce the number of soldiers for the revolution.[21] Zetkin's views were not untypical of other socialists of her generation. Her political adversary Lily Braun, who favored more radical programs for transforming personal life, nevertheless spoke of a necessary reconciliation between child-bearing and work — for the women, that is. Braun regarded motherhood as a woman's duty. However, both Braun and Kollontai, in distinction from Zetkin and the prevailing position of the time, advanced programs for universal maternity insurance for *all* women, irrespective of their marital status.[22]

In an exchange with Inessa Armand, Lenin firmly repudiated the demand for free love, querying whether it could possibly mean freedom "from childbirth"![23] Although Kollontai struggled to define marriage and sexuality as personal matters, she too regarded motherhood as a social concern. She defended women's right to have children and the responsibility of society to provide for the child. On the other hand, she viewed childbearing as a women's responsibility to the socialist order. "Every mother must be

19. *Ibid.*, p. 103. Although Zetkin refers to criticisms of her "Leninist" position by others in her own party, she eventually held sway — at least on this issue. However, with respect to abortion, the German Communist party waged a campaign to legalize it, despite Zetkin's personal misgivings. See Atina Grossman, "Abortion and Economic Crisis: The 1931 Campaign Against 218 in Germany," *New German Critique* 14 (Spring, 1978), pp. 119-138.

20. For an appraisal of Zetkin, see Meyer, "Marxism and the Women's Movement" in *Women in Russia, op. cit.*; Jean H. Quataert, *Reluctant Feminists in German Social Democracy, 1885-1917* (Princeton, 1979); Jean H. Quataert, "Unequal Partners in an Uneasy Alliance: Women and the Working Class in Imperial Germany," Boxer and Quataert, ed. *Socialist Women* (New York, 1978).

21. On the anti-Malthusianism of the socialist movement, see Linda Gordon, *Woman's Body, Woman's Right: A Social History of Birth Control in America* (New York, 1976). See also Quataert, *Reluctant Feminists, op. cit.*, pp. 94-99 for a description of how the SPD avoided the issue of a birth strike by regarding birth control as a "private" issue.

22. See Jean H. Quataert, *Reluctant Feminists, op.cit.*, pp. 96, 106, 133; Clements, *Bolshevik Feminist, op.cit.*, especially pp. 106-133 for Lily Braun's influence on Kollontai.

23. Lenin, *The Emancipation of Women, op.cit.*, p. 36.

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convinced that once she fulfills her natural function and gives a new member to communist society, i.e., a new worker, the collective will love and attend to her and her child."[24] In a chilling harbinger of the Stalinist years, a Russian woman after first celebrating the liberation of women and the state provision of childcare, pauses to reflect: "If you consider the matter, we're really nothing but State machines for bearing children."[25]

Zetkin was primarily responsible for building the largest socialist women's organizaton in the Second International. Her understanding of the special needs of women and the practical necessity of organizing proletarian women in a semi-autonomous organization within the larger socialist movement set a precedent for socialist and communist party organization. Zetkin regarded the bourgeois women's movement with unveiled hostility. Her view was consistent with a widespread political judgement at the time that feminism represented a "right deviation." From the 1890s on Zetkin insisted upon an absolute separation between socialist women and bourgeois feminists. She guided the international women's conference to disavow all collaboration with bourgeois feminists.[26] To an important extent, Zetkin's organizational successes were built upon unflagging attacks on feminists: "By insisting on the unbridgeable class gap between feminists and socialists, Zetkin allayed the party's fears of separatist or feminist tendencies in its women, and secured its backing for the rapid build-up of an elaborate and basically autonomous structure for its women's movement. Zetkin further gained the trust and confidence of the SPD by ruthlessly crushing all feminist tendencies within the women's organization. The chief representative of the feminist viewpoint, Lily Braun, was hounded from the movement and eventually from the party. Zetkin's task was made easier by the fact that feminism in the Social Democratic party was closely associated with revisionism."[27]

Zetkin repeatedly emphasized the class character of the women's movement, a perception that had considerable basis in fact.[28] Still, her greatest suspicions were reserved for the radical feminists, whose outlooks and programs came closest to those advanced by the socialist women's movement.[29] She fought to keep socialist feminism independent by refusing to cooperate with the radicals.

A parallel can be traced in Kollontai, who, in an account of the working women's movement in Russia, writes: "In those days, the position now

24. Cited in Stites, *The Women's Liberation Movement in Russia, op. cit.*, p. 355. See also: "Communism and the Family" and "Theses on Communist Morality in the Sphere of Marital Relations" in *Selected Writings of Alexnadra Kollontai, op. cit.*

25. In Klaus Mehnert, *Youth in Soviet Russia*, trans, Michael Davidson (New York, 1933), p. 221.

26. See Evans, *The Feminists, op.cit.*, p. 166.

27. *Ibid.*, pp. 160-161.

28. See Stites, *The Women's Liberation Movement in Russia, op.cit*; and Jill Liddington and Jill Norris, *One Hand Behind Us* (London, 1978).

29. See the account in Karen Honeycutt, *Clara Zetkin: A Left-Wing Socialist and Feminist in Wilhelmian Germany* (Columbia University, unpublished PhD dissertation), pp. 174ff. regarding Zetkin's opposition to the SPD support for a radical feminist position calling for the end of laws restricting the political activity of women in most German states.

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accepted without question — that in a society based on class contradictions there is no room for a women's movement indiscriminately embracing all women — had to be fought for fiercely. The world of women is divided, just as is the world of men, into two camps: one is in its ideas, aims and interest close to the bourgeoisie, the other to the proletariat, whose aspirations for freedom incorporate the complete solution of the woman question. Thus the two groups, even though they share the general slogan 'women's liberation,' have different aims, different interests and different methods of struggle. Each of the groups instinctively represents the interests of its class, and thus gives a specific class bias to their aims and their actions.... In the years of the first revolution the bourgeois feminist propaganda of 'the one and indivisible women's movement' was still a serious threat to the cohesion of the workers' movement. The 'left' feminists in particular, who were fond of revolutionary phrases and sought the support of the social democratic women, could have presented a danger."[30]

The incorporation of working class women into socialist party organizations varied. In Germany the women's movement of the SPD was largely a movement of married women, overwhelmingly housewives, rather than of women workers. The SPD was concerned about the retarding effect women might have on male workers due to what they deemed to be women's greater conservatism, traditionalism, closer ties to the church, and lower political commitment. The party consciously appealed to housewives and their concerns. They sought to restore a balance in the working class family which had been upset by the course of rapid industrialization. Their policies were predicated on the analysis of women as a backward strata of the working class, the need to subordinate women's interest to family concerns (largely understood in terms of male, not female, family members), and finally, the restriction of the women's movement to the "woman question" and therefore to a subordinate status within the party as a whole. The women's movement's "role within the party thus corresponded in the last analysis to the role of its members in the proletarian home."[31]

The Bolsheviks sought to organize women workers, especially after a wave of militant action by working women beginning in 1910. They were concerned to prevent the possibility of their alignment with bourgeois feminism or other bourgeois political tendencies. They strongly rejected any form of separate organization of women. The Bolsheviks in this period opposed the notion that women constituted a distinct group within the working class. Only after the October Revolution were concessions made to the special needs of women through the establishment of a semi-autonomous organization within the party (the Zhenotdel) devoted to women's interests.

30. *Selected Writings of Alexandra Kollontai, op.cit.,* pp. 51-52.

31. Evans, *The Feminists, op. cit.*, p. 165. For two interesting efforts to account for women's conservatism, see Nancy Fitch, 'The Effect of the Development of Rural Capitalism on the Form of Male Dominance in the Bourbonnais Region of France: Some Analytical Considerations," paper given at the annual meeting of the American Historical Association, Washington, D.C., December, 1980; and Kay Johnson, *The Politics of Women's Rights and Family Reform in China*, (Chicago, forthcoming).

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Nevertheless, the principle of working class unity continued to be upheld. Women's needs were identified, but not to the extent that they might promote sexual antagonism and struggle. Above all, the Bolsheviks extended the earlier attitude of the SPD toward women by regarding women as a backward strata of the class. By implication, women had to be led, their consciousness (being lower) had to be raised, and the political direction would be provided by the party leadership, overwhelmingly male.[32] As the lead editorial of the first issue of the Bolshevik women's journal *Rabotnitsa* (Working Woman) stated: "Politically conscious women see that contemporary society is divided into classes.... The bourgeoisie is one, the working class the other. Their interests are counterposed. The division into men and women in their eyes has no great significance.... The 'women's question' for working men and women — this question is about how to involve the backward masses of working women in organization, how better to make clear to them their interests, how to make them comrades in the common struggle quickly. The solidarity between working men and women, the common cause, the common goals, and the common path to those goals. Such is the settlement of the 'women's' question in the workers' midst." [33]

Autonomy was regarded as a solution to the special problems of organizing backward women. Autonomy was predicated on the assumption that women's interests were peripheral to the larger social struggle and the party was to represent the interests of the class as a whole. To the extent that women's interests conflicted directly with men's interests, autonomy was sacrificed to unity: a unity never defined in terms of women.[34] Women's autonomy, then, was not a principle but a tactic: it could be used or taken away from women on the basis of "wider" political considerations. Even semi-autonomous, subordinate organizations for women embodied potential criticism of party unity and democratic centralism. For this reason women's autonomous organizations were always held in check, their direction provided by the party leadership. Theoretically, as well, feminist autonomy was severely restricted. Already by 1921 the Comintern established the principle that there are no "female" questions, but due to specific female demands, it is necessary to

32. Another dimension of women's lower political involvement in Russian Social Democray in general, whether in its Menshevik or Bolshevik wings, resulted from the emphasis placed on theoretical sophistication. Women may have been disadvantaged by their inferior educations. The percentage of women in the nineteenth century terrorist and populist groups was markedly higher and there the emphasis was on spontaneity rather than theory. See Stites, *The Women's Liberation Movement in Russia, op cit.* On the "construction" of women's conservative nature, see Donzelot, *The Policing of Families, op.cit.*

33. Cited in Anne Bobroff, "The Bolsheviks and Working Women, 1905-1920," p. 55. For an interesting account of how women's interests were directly subordinated to men's in the interest of unity, see Gregory Massell, *The Surrogate Proletariat: Moslem Women and Revolutionary Stategies in Soviet Central Asia 1919-1929* (Princeton, 1974).

34. See Beatrice Brodsky Farnsworth, "Bolshevik Alternatives and the Soviet Family: The 1926 Marriage Law Debate" in *Women in Russia, op. cit.*, pp. 139-165; Judith Stacey, "When Patriarchy Kowtows: The Significance of the Chinese Family Revolution for Feminist Theory" in *Capitalist Patriarchy and the Case for the Socialist Feminism*, Zillah R. Eisenstein editor, (New York, 1979), pp. 299-353; and Delia Davin, *Woman-Work*,(London, 1976); Kay Johnson, *The Politics of Women's Rights and Family Reform in China, op. cit.*

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organize special work among women.[35]

Despite all these qualifications, the independence achieved by the women's movement of the SPD and by the Zhenotdel was considerable. Indeed, it was never again duplicated in socialist party organization. The Zhenotdel was abolished in 1930 and in 1926 the International Women's Secretariat was replaced with a Women's Department of the Executive Committee of the Communist International,[36] a move that set the pattern for socialist and communist party organization of women from that time forward. Women's groups, where sanctioned in the form of auxiliaries or commissions, have been trivialized, reduced to performing inconsequential social functions rather than identifying and pressuring for women's interests inside the party, reduced to recruiting and training women for political tasks, or to providing women with a route into partywide (but not top-level) political leadership roles. Autonomous political activity by and for women, even under the auspices of the party, was decisively rejected as a legitimate form of political practice. Correspondingly, theoretical arguments were reinforced which denied autonomy to questions of sexual oppression or personal life, reducing each instead to an epiphenomenon of material production. Topics of particular relevance to women such as birth control and abortion were dismissed as personal and private, not political matters.[37] Family life within the working class was subjected to less criticism, due to its potentially divisive impact. Finally, economic goals were given renewed emphasis and utopian projects such as the communal households were regarded as diversions from the main tasks of socialist construction and economic backwardness.

Second and Third International Marxists were unprepared for the explosive personal and political implications of feminism. The dilemmas that they confronted regarding women and sexual life continue to haunt the present period. In a remarkable restaging of an old debate, Rudolf Bahro, a "revisionist," advocates communal households and the destruction of the insular nuclear family, to be replaced by the socialization of housework, child care and education;[38] while more "orthodox" Marxists, whether in China, Russia, Cuba or the U.S., attack free sexuality on behalf of rigidly structured male and female roles in defense of working class culture. Tragically, neither position escapes the antinomies of earlier Marxist writings on the family; neither position adequately confronts the logic of feminist struggle for over two centuries. If we are to progress toward a serious reconciliation between feminist and Marxist ideas, it is necessary to elaborate the challenges that feminism now poses to earlier versions of Marxist theory. At this juncture, the feminist critique of Marxism merges with 20th-century Marxist debate.

35. Rowbotham, *A New World for Women, op.cit.*, p. 27.

36. Stites, *The Women's Liberation Movement in Russia, op.cit.*, p. 34.

37. This development cannot be isolated from the legacy of anti-Malthusianism in the working class movement. On the subject of Malthusianism, see Alan Chase, *The Legacy of Malthus: The Social Costs of the New Scientific Racism* (New York, 1977).

38. See Rudolf Bahro, *The Alternative in Eastern Europe*, trans. David Fernbach (London, 1978), pp. 444-447.

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NOTES AND COMMENTARY:

E.P. THOMPSON AND HIS CRITICS

by Paul Buhle

Thompson is probably the most famous contemporary historian writing in English, certainly the dean of the radical "new social history" which seeks to reconstruct our understanding of the past. Thompson's anti-nuclear initiatives have returned him most recently to the center of the English (and to a lesser extent, European) political spotlight. His tireless public agitation appeals at once to democratic national traditions and to the imperatives for an internationalism outside formal socialist and communist parties, and make him an important strategic and moral figure. And yet neither history nor politics has stirred much interest in the systematic quality of Thompson's varied work.

There are good reasons for a certain shyness about the subject. Thompson's mixture of detailed historical study and rambunctious polemics hardly ever fosters an explicit summary of methods and goals. Neither has he offered any particular encouragement for writings about himself. Anderson's *Arguments within English Marxism* is really an off-tackle shot at Thompson's strictures against Althusser and a delicate proposal for amity between competing schools of Marxist thought. Thompson will not bother to answer. Palmer's important *The Making of E.P. Thompson: Marxism, Humanism and History*, is by the author's own admission a modest appreciation with only passing hints at critique.[1] Thompson's work, as he implies in his gathering of diverse essays in *The Poverty of Theory*, must continue speaking for itself.

But does it? Not much. Unlike his late *bête noir*, Althusser, unlike the Frankfurt School or Surrealism, Thompson has not founded a groupish trend in politics or theory. Like Luxemburg from the old days, like his friend C.L.R. James, Thompson is an individual even in the crowded radical avenues. He praises the Young Marx over the author of *Capital*, but condemns the Hegelianism that made the philosophical leaps possible. He finds radical roots everywhere in the life of the emerging British working class, but is myopic (or at least publicly silent) in connecting recent and future prospects with the contemporary popular culture. Once pronounced the arch enemy of orthodox British Communism, fervent in his attacks on neo-Stalinist manifestations, he stubbornly declares his roots in the Popular Front era. He is a romantic and a utopian, perhaps the finest of our time, who shuns either label. *Sui generis*, Thompson is still not quite a paradox. On the contrary, his paradoxical elements glisten with informative contradictions, unresolved questions for revolutionary prospects as a whole, and confirmations of the general path he has staked out.

To get at the root we have to go back to William Morris, Thompson's first major subject and his perpetual guiding light. Morris, like his disciple, was an odd duck by any definition. Renowned poet, architect, pre-Raphaelite ally in the appeal for the "organic" society capitalism had left behind, Morris came into the socialist movement only at mid-life and behaved in a most heretical way. He dominated one wing of British socialism with his energy, talent, reputation and money. But he never suited the taste of Engels and the emerging European Social Democrats because he retained his romanticism with no sense of shame and gave vent to his unique beliefs through

1. Bryan D. Palmer, *The Making of E.P. Thompson: Marxism, Humanism and History* (Toronto, 1981). Regrettably, I did not receive this book until the present essay had been virtually completed.

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moral appeals to working class temperament, historical prose romances, and finally his utopian classic *News from Nowhere*. Morris acted out instead of resolving the conflict between romantic idealism and working class politics. This is also Thompson from start to finish.

What Thompson calls in Morris "the education of desire" can be found at the center of the most penetrating extension (or critique) of Marxism yet elucidated. Landauer, Breton, Bloch, Benjamin, Marcuse and a gallery of others have sought to unbind radicalism from the fatalist materialism and one-sided concentration upon power that seeps through Social Democracy, Stalinism, Trotskyism, Maoism and every other "ism" with political factions. Thompson puts it this way: "When I say Morris may be assimilated to Marxism only in the course of a re-ordering of Marxism itself, I don't of course imply that Marxist thinkers have not noticed these problems or proposed solutions. But it is in this area that (I think) the problem still lies. And 'the case of Morris,' and Marxism's bewilderment before it, emphasizes that the problem is unresolved. Moreover, it should now be clear that there is a sense in which Morris, as a utopian and moralist, can never be assimilated to Marxism, not because of any contradiction of purposes but because one may not assimilate desire to knowledge, and because the attempt to do so is to confuse two different operative principles of culture. So I've phrased the problem wrongly, and Marxism requires less a re-ordering of its parts than a sense of humility before those parts of culture which it can never order. The motions of desire may be legible in the text of necessity and may then become subject to rational explanation and criticism. But such criticism can scarcely touch these motions at their sources.... What Marxism might do, for a change, is sit on its head a little in the interests of Socialism's heart. It might close down one counter in its universal pharmacy, and cease dispensing potions of analysis to cure the maladies of desire. This might do good politically as well, since it would allow a little space, not only for literary utopians, but also for the unprescribed initiatives of everyday men and women who, in some part of themselves, are also alienated and utopian by turns."[2]

Other writers have brought in non-Marxist religious or ethical principles, Freudianism or mysticism, or have fudged on the contradictions by allowing that none such exists. The result is the same. The dream, the fantasy, the spiritual meditation is an anti-historical act that cannot be integrated comprehensively into any rational calculation of socialism as the inevitable outcome of historical forces. The impulse is too subjective and persists with only modestly changed forms across whole historical epochs. More important, the dreamer expresses the wish to leap out of chronological time and presumed evolutionary progress, not at some postponed date but at the moment, an act possible only in mental flight.

Still, as Morris knew, the same impulse is absolutely necessary for the revolutionary movement just to exist, let alone to move toward successful social transformation. The rank-and-file of every movement draws such energies into itself, no matter what "scientific" label they are taught to slap onto their imaginings. The insurrectionary drive to go beyond the melioration of the intolerable, to make the break required at the moment of revolution, owes still more to the same sources. The agony of 20th-century Marxism has been that Marxism-Leninisms have almost uniformly (with important exceptions) condemned the utopian legacy in favor of cosmic pseudo-science, abandoning the field to individuals, isolated small movements, and cranks of every description. The wonder of the century has been that the impulse has nevertheless survived, seen again in every uprising of the spirit in forms diverse as

2. *William Morris, Romantic to Revolutionary* (New York, 1977), pp. 806-807.

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underground culture and liberation theology. The evidence mounts for a non-Marxist, or, better, post-Marxist conclusion. Whatever the objective, discernible structure and trajectory of socialisms, they cannot reach or even define their real goal without drawing upon the reserve labor power of the imagination. In the era of potential nuclear holocaust, *only* that power is likely to tip the scales from futility to revolutionary action.

Is this a theoretical *cul de sac?* Only if the problem is seen as a static dualism. Thompson, the Morrisonian activist, responded to the convulsions of Hungary and exposures of the 20th Soviet Congress by leading a group of prominent British intellectuals out of the Communist movement toward "socialist humanism." They took as their responsibility the encouragement of a New Left free from Stalinist (or Trotskyist, or Laborist) dogmatics, resting upon the first great anti-nuclear movement and a sense of comradeship with their Eastern European counterparts. *The New Reasoner* (1957-59), which Thompson edited with Saville, insisted on the Eastern European cauldron as forerunner to a new, wider revolutionary impulse as well as on the definition of cultural ground as the next arena of events.[3]

Thompson and his allies went further in defining the main lines of the emerging radicalism than is commonly recognized. The appeal for a post-Leninist structure and quality to the movement, assurance that "the aspiration towards community should find its most conscious expression" there, became benchmarks of our own civil rights, later student power, and women's liberation tendencies. Thompson's assiduous encouragement to campus radicals to take the lead, his prescriptions for non-dogmatic critical thought, likewise bore real fruit on both sides of the Atlantic. The new radicals were not to take up the slogan of socialist humanism that Thompson set out. But anyone reading passages like the following will see how precisely Thompson had caught the substance of the thing: "The New Left has little confidence in the infallibility, either of institutions or of historical processes.... The work of changing people's values and attitudes and the summoning up of aspirations to further change by means of utopian critiques of existing society, remains as much a duty of socialists as the conquest and maintenance of working class power. At every stage, before, during and after the conquest of power, the voluntary participation of the people must be enlisted, and the centers of power must themselves, wherever possible, be broken up.... The New Left is sometimes identified by observers by its concern with 'cultural' questions, as opposed to the basic bread-and-butter preoccupations of the Old Left. But this is true only if it is understood that these 'cultural' questions are questions about life. For the New Left wants political and economic changes *for* something, so that people can themselves do something with their lives as a whole. We have seen enough of a socialism perverted into the worship of poods of grain and tons of steel, with men identified as producers of material values and little else, where 'consumption' has always to wait, and where 'culture' is a means of social control directed by the Establishments. These 'cultural' questions are not only questions of value; they are also, in the strictest sense, questions of political power."[4]

This, the generation after Hungary, would in Thompson's anticipation find the means to reconcile Morris' vision of common beauty and life well lived with the historical legacy of the labor movement. Not speaking the words, perhaps, it could nevertheless vindicate that other favorite poet of Thompson, William Blake, in something closer yet to the heart of the romantic quest. The fertile plain of the

3. See Palmer's succinct treatment of this period, Chapters 3-4 of *The Making of E.P. Thompson.*

4. Thompson, "The New Left," *New Reasoner*, 9 (Summer 1959), p. 10.

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primordial imagination, which had once fostered history through collective myth, might now make possible renewal of human potential at a higher level, obliteration of the barriers between subjective knowledge (poetry) and objective knowledge (history): here the dualism would cease to have any meaning. Thompson persistently backed away from any shortcut to paradise, insisting upon the need for discipline, patience and recognition that economic collectivism would not automatically heal age-old psychic wounds. Nevertheless, the popular polemicist and speaker had placed his hopes decisively on the side of the dreamers.

If he saw any obvious danger signs, they lay precisely in the inclination of the New Left to abandon altogether the old material bases of socialism, to emphasize alienation at the expense of exploitation, and to sentimentalize the violent edges of lumpen presence as the only real prospect outside the schools. Thompson especially scored the tendency to view the mass of the population as pitiful objects rather than subjects of their own history. Behind that weakness lurked an abandonment of the positive values that had been sustained from the Old Left, the modest acceptance of what labor and socialist organizations had been able to accomplish and of the ongoing struggle between competing moralities of collective and individualistic aspiration inherent in blue-collar community life so long as capitalism continued.[5]

Not long after, Thompson was amply vindicated, at least in his own mind, for these last Cassandra-like hints. *The New Reasoner* merged with *Universities and Left Review* in the 1960s to form the *New Left Review*. After an editorial shuffle, he felt himself pressured out on political grounds. The Young Turks acted as New Leftists almost everywhere, viewing the over-30 Thompson as representative of a distant and somewhat discredited political generation. Thompson's much-beloved no-nukes movement disappeared from the spotlight, the hopeful Left Clubs failed to stir much more than intellectual excitement, and above all the integration of the intelligentsia into another phase of labor activity simply did not take place. Caught in the swirl of international events and campus politics, the New Left would not ever be the vehicle for the specific kind of transcendence and renewal Thompson had anticipated.

One could almost say Thompson now derived from historical examples what he could not demonstrate in contemporary life. Not only richness of detailed historical insight mark *The Making of the English Working Class* (1963), later *Whigs and Hungers* (1978) and the many essays along the way. The literary verve, the exemplary tone of sympathy for the main protagonists displays a passion that — one cannot help thinking — has been displaced from elsewhere. Contrary to current mythology, Thompson assuredly did not singlehandedly revolutionize the writing of labor history. The process had been well under way in Britain and would soon commence in the United States for similar political reasons. But *The Making of the English Working Class* gave the great public impetus. Young scholars who did not actually plough through the dense 700 pages of text found themselves nevertheless deeply influenced by the sense that history with this method had a purpose and a unique understanding of process. Apostles and descendents of Thompson sought to reconstruct the lived experience of labor and the poor, especially as they passed through the initial major industrialization phase, to capture the radical vitality at the dawn of the modern urban-industrial age. The documented subjectivity of these generations, carrying the age-old messages of folk lore and social indignities into their factory surroundings, signified a proof of Thompson's elementary theorem. Subjectivity had not been blotted out by the tumultuous passage. The steady reshaping of working class response by the means accessible bespoke the renewal of communal spirit, heightened self-

5. "Commitment in Politics," *Universities and Left Review*, 6 (Spring 1959), pp. 50-54.

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consciousness, and a growing sense of the possible future.[6]

There was something missing here, of course. The chronological distance between Thompson's 1830 end point and the present could hardly be greater. The work of Thompsonian history in Britain and the United States has rarely gone beyond 1910 and for obvious reasons. The verification of a literal working class culture becomes increasingly problematic toward the present. The proof of the pudding, class engaging class outright for hegemony, has been dominant only on occasion; among the English-speaking nations, mostly by implication (the sit-down strikes of the 1930s in the United States, the 1945 Labour Party victory). Moreover, the whole analysis of the ultimate working class trajectory seemed to lack a certain philosophical core, a wobbly framework that Thompson buttressed but could not successfully fructify through invocations of the romantic heritage. If the British working class had lost something decisive between the ages of Blake (the French Revolution) and Morris (the appearance of modern unions and of political socialism), Thompson could not say precisely what that might be, or how it would be found again. The old dualism tenaciously held.

Thompson's harshest historical critics — by no accident the *New Left Review* editors — pounded away unmercifully at just these weak spots. Thompson had misconceived the entire British historical trajectory, they insisted. The inability of the bourgeoisie to carry through *their* revolution had rebounded on the working class two centuries later, a proletariat further stultified by limited aims and corrupted by imperial plunder. Thompson's reasoning, they insisted above all, had set down a smokescreen hiding the muddle-headed absence of Leninist rigor. The reform tradition (and the very British-style Communist contribution to it) that the labor movement exemplified obviously meant something very different to Thompson than to the New Left intellectuals fresh from Oxford with visions of Vietnam, Cuba, the student and American black power revolts before their eyes. This was no debate about history in a vacuum. The insurgents had to topple *all* of Thompson's premises to carry through their own conception of a New Left that drew upon a myriad of continental theoreticians — Trotsky, Gramsci and Althusser most important.

Thus ensued a Battle Royal, with echoes of intellectual artillery heard across Europe and the United States. Never, in the English language, had structuralist Marxists and a prominent opponent engaged in such a thoroughgoing set-to. Not in memory had prominent historians made such explicit links between their methods, assumptions and politics. True, the absence of some key influences gives the fray a rather provincial British, or one might say *non-German*, character. But this has its advantages as well. Subtract Hegel from Marx on both sides of the equation, romantic historian and structuralist Marxist-Leninist, and we get a unique distillate of the two differences that separate out a view of history with the heroic and tyrannical forces in perpetual struggle on the one hand, from a view of history as the culmination of mass false-consciousness and rulers' self-consciousness into the science of Marxist praxis on the other.[7]

6. Two particular commentaries from the American side come to mind: Paul Faler, "Working Class Historiography," *Radical America*, III (March-April 1969) and Alan Dawley, "E.P. Thompson and the Peculiarities of the Americans," *Radical History Review*, 19 (Winter 1978-79).

7. Some high points are registered in Tom Nairn, "The English Working Class," *New Left Review*, 24 (March-April 1964); Perry Anderson, "Socialism and Pseudo-Empiricism: The Myths of Edward Thompson," *New Left Review*, 35 (January-February, 1966); and Thompson's reply, "The Peculiarities of the English," reprinted in *The Poverty of Theory* (London, 1978).

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The clearest declaration of faith and statement of total purpose Thompson is ever likely to provide is his essay "The Poverty of Theory," in his collection of the same name. If the book has not received deserved attention as a major theoretical document, it is surely because of Thompson's peculiar style. He takes the reader on a walking tour with himself as feckless tour guide, rambling on at length about some landscape (especially Theory with a capital "T") and then apologizing for the necessity of the visit and the dullness of the explanation. He is loaded with one-liners and comic monologues, as if to suggest that the most serious criticism must be approched with a sense of deviltry. And when he feels downright uncomfortable, he tells us so. Some vicinities he simply will not travel. He hands out compensations in flourishes of self-revealing commentary. He wants us to know who *he* is hardly less than he wanted the reader to understand Morris. If theoretical writers in general conducted themselves in such a manner, they would surely devise new radical philosophies of sun worship to justify exposure of their bare parts.

Thompson might have taken up where he left off in his self-defense essay, "The Peculiarities of the English," with a patient, step-by-step critique of Anderson's own prime works, *Lineages of the Absolutist State* and *Passages from Antiquity to Feudalism*. Thereby, Thompson could easily have made his own argument universal. No great insight is required to draw implications from the fact that the great pre-modern events Marx and Engels found so moving — the revolt of Spartacus (Marx's favorite historical hero) and the medieval religious revolts (subject of Engels' only major historical study) — are like other lesser such events conspicuously relegated to minor notes in Anderson's sweeping account. *Lineages* and *Passages* are indeed remarkable synthetic accounts, but of a particular character. Anderson marginalized not only outright class struggle but also the rebellious undercurrents of culture across a vast expanse in favor of a model that displaces "conflict" to a disproportion of production and social forces, granting the ruling classes the self-knowledge that their underlings so patently lack. This is structuralism on a grand scale, the renunciation of pre-modern revolutionary forms (Chiliastic Christianity, "inarticulate" slave revolts, mystic rejections of worldly authorities on whatever grounds) for the famous "overdetermination." Is Thompson too cautious or too generous to go tit for tat? Actually, he is too Thompsonian, as he takes his ground in the political life he has himself led, in the practical conclusions he has drawn as a historian; only by extension does he take on the inspired master, Althusser, directly, and always for the reason of defending his New Left from the usurpations of neo-Stalinism.

Thompson nevertheless makes his boldest arguments in relation to the Marxist legacy, and here the whole essay is likely to rise or fall by standard measurements of intra-Marxist debate. I believe he delivers a decisive blow to the theory of "base" and "superstructure" in favor of a Marxian analysis that takes historic circumstances in their totality and tries to reason out the contradictions from the evidence at hand. The following passage is typical of Thompson's slashing polemic at its best, against the misuses of the materialist determination "in the last instance" (Marx's phrase) and the structuralist argument for autonomy: "Did I observe that? Well, for most of the time I was watching, law was running quite free of economy, doing its errands, defending its property, preparing the way for it, and so on.... But...I hesitate to whisper the heresy...on several occasions, while I was actually watching, the lonely hour of the last instance *actually came*. The last instance, like an unholy ghost, actually grabbed hold of law, throttled it, and forced it to change its language and to will into existence forms appropriate to the mode of production, such as enclosure acts and new case-law excluding customary common rights. But was law 'relatively autonomous'? Oh, *yes*.

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Sometimes. Relatively. *Of course.*"[8]

Under Thomopson's withering attack, the central elements of Althusserian logic come apart one by one. The circularity of definitions within definitions Thompson acutely traces back to Stalin's philosophical *reductio absurdum:* the elimination of mass self-activity from history *through Marxist logic!* The Party must *become* history (alternatively, cosmic dialectic is intermittently insisted upon, Leninism, the Law of the Universe working itself out upon the human terrain) no less than consciousness. The key structuralist adaptation is to displace process with structure, a maneuver that achieves a similar end. Because in structure, no one but the totalizer of theoretical practice or real practice (Mao to Althusser, Trotsky to Anderson) can really know.[9]

One of the beauties of Thompson's effort is his insight into the ways structuralism recapitulates nominalist academic (above all, American social scientific) thought. The two modes placed side by side become the kissing cousins of vulgar materialism and vulgar idealism. Having disposed of the subject and of any direct study of conditions, theoreticians have free rein at all manner of sociological excess. Systems, sub-systems, meta-systems, why not? Like supply-side Reaganomics, where inflation and mass impoverishment only demonstrate that the poor have not sacrificed enough, the restored equilibrium of any severely shaken society is proof of its ultimate coherence and class-conscious rulership. Even revolution essentially demonstrates that a new totalizing politics has taken place. For the real historian, Althusserian nuggets such as "the mechanism of production of the knowledge effect lies in the mechanism which underlies the action of the forms of order in the scientific discourse of the proof," are a confession of theoretical bankruptcy. In Thompson's words, the "*dialogue* between social being and socializing consciousness," the essential step of any intentional activity and many semi-conscious ones, has been blown away. In its place we are offered solipsistic homilies conceptually somewhere between Descartes, Spinoza and Mao Zhe Dong, but really suitable only for the classroom.[10]

The most treacherous footing is reached in *The Poverty of History*, when Thompson makes his own case for historical logic, within and against the Marxian classics. He is equally queasy with the early philosophical works of Marx and with the final stages of *Capital, Anti-Dühring*, and the scraps of scientistic anthropology. In short, he favors *The German Ideology, The Poverty of Philosophy*, the actual historical writings, such as the *Eighteenth Brumaire*, for their insistence upon empirical evidence and notion of historical agency. Here, Marx had grown out of the early abstract ruminations and not yet fallen into the conceptual short-hand required for systematic critique.

The case might be put differently by an author not so suspicious of Hegel, as I will suggest below. But Thompson has nevertheless offered an original and striking defense of historical analysis as the penetration of hidden or misunderstood conflict. And not only conflict over "base" or "superstructure," but rather conflict about the very meaning of life between contesting groups and classes. Without that penetration, Thompson seems to be saying, all the theoretical analysis in the world is valueless. Worse, without the subject front and center, "Marxism" is just another name for domination. The degeneration of the empirical and subjective, from *Anti-Dühring* to Lenin's *Materialism and Empiriocriticism,* to Stalin's *Foundations of Leninism*, follows inexorably upon the decay of the original premises. And if far-sighted revolutionary historians had truly offered the conceptual road out, then Thompson would be correct in viewing Althusserianism as a countermove, a "general police

8. *Poverty of Theory*, p. 288.
9. *Ibid.*, especially pp. 281-283.
10. *Ibid.*, pp. 198, 201.

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action within ideology. . . the attempt to reconstruct Stalinism at the level of theory."[11]

Alas, if only things were so simple. Anderson, in *Arguments within British Marxism,* has no difficulty in showing that structuralism captured the imagination of all sorts of New Left intellectuals, that the structuralist-oriented *New Left Review* and its press have offered up an abundance of varied anti-Stalinist material, that Thompson's proffered division of 1956-style socialist humanists from Stalinists is at the very least an impossible over-simplification. The historical recapture of subjectivity, for that matter, looks rather less decisive at close range. The recovery of socialist or pre-socialist heroes, as examples for today, tends toward imprecision and moralism among just those who claim to have abandoned vagueness and abstraction. The romanticization of another people in another time also — Anderson could have added — fits nicely into a perfectly respectable academic career where the troubles of the present may be sublimated into the archival pleasures of the past. If Thompson seeks to declare war on all degenerated Marxisms, then the varieties of university scholarship will suggest some contradictory conclusions. Too much has happened in the confused lexicography of the Left. The issues go too deep for such untangling.

Thompson knows, bluster aside, that the issues are personal and to a considerable extent generational. For him the glory years of 1936-46 restored voluntarism to the Marxist vocabulary through the mass movements against fascism and for a reconstructed Europe. Those who did not march in the same ranks have enormous difficulty appreciating how a communist party, strapped to Stalinist internal discipline, the pseudo-utopian vision of Russia and above all the vagaries of Comintern foreign policy could nevertheless contain a dynamic core of democratic, principled militants. No better can Thompson understand what it was like to come onto the political scene in the 1960s when the labor movement had lost its *elan,* when Maoism, the Vietnamese revolution and sundry domestic movements had usurped whatever continuing appeal socialist humanism might have manifested. Many in Thompson's generation had found through workers' education or trade union connections the opportunity to merge themselves with labor's historical cause; the university atmosphere of 1960s radicalism had the inevitable effect of reinforcing a particular kind of intellectual milieu with its own constituency. "No account can convey the sickening jerk of deceleration between 1945 and 1948," Thompson recalls from the political events of his own youth.[12] Neither can anyone not in the midst of the 1960s movement fully appreciate the following defeat and disillusionment. If there is a single great telling difference, it is hardly intellectual at all in the direct sense, but rather the difference between a break from a party once hegemonic among the Left, and the attempt to make sense of continuing practice amid a disintegrated muddle. For better or worse, the moment of break reinforces some earlier inclination and puts a stamp on the scholarship to come.

Of course, not every New Left intellectual took to Althusser, any more than every reformed communist intellectual became a socialist humanist. But what these tendencies shared, besides an overlap of personal history, they share also with the rest of us: no specific Marxism, no determinate theoretical elaboration, has stood the test of time. Not humanism, not science, not class struggle, nor anti-imperialism, nor anything else has had the claimed predictive power or distinction of an internally consistent socialist theoretical system. All this is painfully obvious. But it bears repeating here because Thompson and Althusser — their disciples aside — represent

11. *Ibid.*, p. 323.
12. *Ibid.*, p. 265.

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two alternative responses to despair the last times it fell so heavily upon the Western radical camp. Thompson and his friends chose romantic moral commitment, and history by example, over science and party discipline; Althusser and the others who took the Maoist route out of European communism chose the seeming certainty of logic (including the historical logic of communist governments in power) over the vague promises of an almost utopian hope.

Thompson's choice was a far better one. He has not been caught in the paradox of an Anderson, who must insist that until the last 200 years the human mass dragged itself through history blind and deaf to its own condition, yet armed with science is (relatively speaking) overnight prepared for self-determination. Thompson does not have to rely upon the thin political traditions of Trotskyism and the theoretical model of Trotsky's *History of the Russian Revolution,* where (once again) the party creates class consciousness, revolutionary consciousness, revolution itself from the dull human clay — then falls back at the stroke of a clever charlatan. Neither does Thompson have to defend the indefensible, the Stalinist attack (in which Althusser genuinely played a major role) upon the earliest enthusiasts of the "Young Marx" as bourgeois counter-revolutionaries.[13] By leaving open the questions of pre-modern history, by disabusing himself of any alternative vanguard tradition, by seizing upon the promise of an open-minded Marxist revival however vague in formulation, Thompson has placed himself in a position to help facilitate a genuinely new radical thought.

He would have placed himself far more effectively and coherently if he had not been so shy about Hegelian dialectics. At one point, he remarks that William Blake will suffice for his own dialecticial proclivities. The distance is not so far as Thompson — for that matter, Marx or Engels — may have thought. It was Hegel who named Jakob Böhme the father of German philosophy, reinventor of the "objectic dialectic" from the antiquity of Heraclitus, and Blake who hailed the same Böhme in *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell* as the true originator of the ideas that the then-fashionable Swedenborg retailed as second-hand revelation. Hegel went the way of history while Blake redefined Böhme's Christian mysticism to openly claim Desire (Love) as a cosmic principle, but these two contemporaries together present precisely the dichotomy across which Thompson's own remarkable work has spread itself, and sometimes spread itself thin.[14] And if history and poetry had in the bourgeois revolutionary epoch to advance beyond the primal unity Böhme's vision represents, we are perhaps prepared now for another leap to a different and higher unity. Thompson feels it, hints it, but is wary of being taken as irrationalist if he says it aloud.

There are yet another series of approaches more concrete, political in the immediate sense, which a recuperation of historical dialectics should allow Thompson. No doubt because of his own past, he has continually regarded the Communist Parties' sins as failures of judgment and morality. Any other formula might serve to justify crimes on the grounds of historical necessity, as the old Stalinism

13. Thompson has only not gone far enough to refute the standard Russian charge, elaborated by Althusser and repeated uncritically by Perry Anderson, that the rediscovery of the Young Marx and of Hegel's continuing significance was an abstract intellectual endeavor, removed from class conflict to the academy. The lengthiest translations of *The Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts* hitherto were made in the mid-1940s by the Detroit group around C.L.R. James and Raya Dunayevskaya and used expressedly in discussions with factory workers about alienation at the point of production. James' 1947 pamphlet, *Dialectical Materialism and the Fate of Humanity,* among other writings, expanded on Hegelian themes, leading to *Notes on Dialectics* (1948), a full-length appreciation of the Hegelian connections with Marxism. All this some years before the "rediscovery" of the Young Marx in the academy.

14. The secondary works on Böhme remain pitifully limited in scope and interpretation.

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did so well. But what if Stalinism is itself, like the non-Communist labor bureaucracy, a historical *manifestation* of capitalist development? [15] We need not deprive the sincere communist rank-and-file of its subjectivity, its sometimes heroic role, to suggest that the generations of the 1920s-1950s could not help reproducing the forms of domination which are (next to nuclear weapons) class society's worst legacy. "Vanguard" and "mass" — it was not so much bad ideas but the tenacity of world capitalism that froze these terms, made for Stalinist degeneration in the East and for deformed, anti-democratic parties in the West. Of course, there were times when "better" Communist parties might have changed the course of history, in nations if not the world. It would be heartless as well as analytically mistaken to disregard the moral courage of dissenters. But from Trotsky on, the reformulation of the revolutionary project has been stunted by the belief that a better Bolshevik Party would make all things right. Until that misconception is itself assimilated into a larger, more comprehensive history of modern revolutionary activity, we will go on reproducing the same mistaken perspective, and incidentally discrediting dialectics as a mere philosophical laboratory tool.

Wrestling with these problems helps us to ask how we may practically get beyond the replication of capitalist forms. Here, without saying so precisely, Thompson has made a mighty contribution. Along with the division of sex roles, the deepest division in human history has been that dividing mental from manual labor. William Morris' lifework may be traced to the simple faith that the barrier had to be overcome, for to do so meant the eclipse of all limitations upon the essentially playful, collective capacities of the species. If Herbert Marcuse saw this problem through the Freudian insight into sexual sublimation, if a pan-African theorist such as C.L.R. James drew similar conclusions through his observation of black athletes in colonial sports, then Thompson has seen the potential through the supreme poetic-craft consciousness of the Nottingham dreamer. Full and egalitarian sexuality, the basic human movement in emancipated sports (or dance), poetry as craft and craft as poetry: these constitute symptomatic points of liberation, already alive in society regardless of their present degradation, holding potential energies greater than any existing political forms. The difficulty remains, as it has since the experiments of the 1960s, to relocate the yearnings of daily life in the revolutionary center.

The hazards of embarking outward from the fixed perspectives of the First to the Fourth International have long been obvious. The broadside of a friendly critic launched at Thompson in 1957, when the crusade for socialist humanism had just begun, rightly posed the question Thompson has spent much of his mature intellectual effort seeking to answer. Thompson, the critic pronounced, had come to want the working class to make the revolution merely because it was "morally robbed," and "fundamentally, Edward, you understand this awkward truth. But you hate capitalist society with such poetic intensity that you are unwilling to admit that the workers, who are victims of its cultural nihilism, can feel tolerably satisfied with it. Hence you try to replace the discredited principle of increasing economic misery with the new principle of increasing general nastiness, and try to persuade yourself that, eventually, the workers are going to react to the latter in the same way as they were supposed to react to the former.... This is not Marxism; it is romanticism." [16]

Here we are down to the nitty-gritty. Thompson has suggested, whispered, implied when he should have shouted from the housetops the appropriate comeback: Marxism

15. C.L.R. James had made this point best in *Notes on Dialectics* (Westport, Conn., 1981).

16. Harry Hanson, "An Open Letter to Edward Thompson," *New Reasoner*, 2 (Fall 1957), p. 87.

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without romanticism is not worth a dime. He has, however, made the point historically in grand style. If he had extended his work to the later 19th and 20th centuries, he surely would have shown that working class movements, official ideologies notwithstanding, have always encompassed romantic moods in their songs, theater, music, ideals. For the vast bulk of members and sympathizers, these romantic expressions have been far more important than the claims to science and the intellectual systems spun to justify them. To be sure, socialists and communists have always been comforted by the faith that history was on their side. But like all teleologies, this was itself a rather metaphysical point, as close to Böhme's repudiation of history since the Garden of Eden (Marxists used to have their own version in the Golden Age of pre-class society) as to the more finite collapse of capitalist economics. The recapitulation of capitalist-style forms of authority, the non-revolutionary statist roles forced upon the movements as a whole (reinforced, as Thompson says, by the leaders' claims to historical justification and necessity) thwarted the great creative manifestations of millennial enthusiasm, and threaten even in retrospect to obscure them beyond recognition. Nevertheless they happened, the true hidden legacy to our own prefigurative hopes today.[17]

If "history" remains at least partly on our side — even while time to transform the world is evidently running out — it shapes our prospects in a way Thompson brilliantly intuited. "The new society is not — as in Russia — to be torn prematurely from the old, but is in many features formed within the old," he wrote in the first number of *The New Reasoner*.[18] If Thompson erred, it was because the romantic in him has never been allowed to put the rationalist to work full-time on our *recent* past, to consciously embroider imagination's pattern upon the new cloth of contemporary life. Thompson has been busy with other things, and properly so. But we still wish he had given (or would still give) more time to the elucidation of the new order in the making. Such a task would bring together, in the open, the phantoms of a sometimes beautiful past with promiseful glimpses of the future. Would it be utopian? So much the better.

Even if he doesn't get around to this task, Thompson has amply elucidated the need for such a conclusion. And not only by his books and lectures, but by his life as well. We live in an age when our genuine heroes are likely to be made the object of an academic cottage industry, their names invoked for ideas they never endorsed and the corpus of their political commitment picked over for the least political of monographic exercises. Thompson resists the attempt with every ounce of fighting energy he continues to expend. Short of socialism, perhaps we glimpse romanticism or utopianism, the closing of the dualisms, best in the personality, the individual temperament. That would put Thompson back with his beloved Morris and Blake, forward to the inconceivably integrated personalities that a better age would surely bring. A bustard Thompson called himself once, a British bird that cannot fly. His illusion surely. For us he is like Lenin's Rosa Luxemburg, an eagle that may dip down in miscalculation from time to time, but that can always be seen in the next moment heading out toward some dim horizon.

17. See my "Jews and American Communism: The Cultural Question," *Radical History Review*, 23 (Spring 1980).

18. "Socialist Humanism: An Epistle to the Philistines," *New Reasoner*, 1 (Summer 1957).

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JAPAN AS A MANIPULATED SOCIETY

by Tetsuo Kogawa

While the success of the Japanese economy is widely discussed, the thrust of the analyses have recently changed. In the late 1970s they were critical in the sense that this success was seen as based on cheap labor, employees' self-sacrifice, substandard housing and sewage systems, people's thrift, a "conspiracy" among government, big business and finance, and so on.[1] In the 1980s, such explanations have turned to a reappraisal of "Japanese management" and other similar factors.[2]

Nonetheless, it remains that Japanese economic growth has been achieved *at the expense of the folk tradition*. A high degree of conformity and homogeneity in Japanese society and a *banzai* collectivity of corporate institutions have facilitated economic prosperity. But such social attributes are qualitatively different from the real folk tradition:[3] the living dynamics of self-transforming (revolutionary) and self-preserving (reactionary) potential. Japanese conformity and homogeneity can be seen as the products of conscious and unconscious control of the economic and political system. As Gramsci put it, there is no "pure" spontaneity. Japanese economic success is not the outcome of an accidental convergence of the renovated economic system and a pre-existing spontaneous socio-cultural tradition. In fact, no country other than Japan has succeeded in developing so exhaustive a system of controls. Even the Third Reich failed in its naked attempt to control so totally.

Of course, Japan has had a long history of political control over its culture and society since the fall of the Tokugawa in the late 19th century. Yet, socio-cultural diversity survived even the heavy centralism of the Tokugawa period. Afterward, the modern state established its homogenizing apparatus by revitalizing one of the oldest ruling traditions with the help of feudal anti-Tokugawa forces, especially Satsuma, Choshu and the Western, or more properly, the Prussian, principle of domination: the emperor system (*Tenno-sei*). Although the emperor — *tenno* — was historically a rallying point for the anti-establishment nationalist movement, he was not *the* total system of culture, society and political institutions until the Meiji restoration of 1868, when the 1889 Meiji Constitution was drafted on the model of the Prussian Constitution.

Tenno-sei was achieved through the reorganization of the artificial patriarchal familialism, the monopoly of *Shintoism* and destruction of religious folklore, military indoctrination, mass primary education, mass media, and the use of violence to coerce people into submission. As early as the turn of this century, every facet of life was systematized by *Tenno-sei* and Japan became a "Tate society,"[4] with *Tenno-sei* constituting a special pattern of behavior, relations, feelings. This pattern has been so deeply imbedded in the

1. For an approach of this type, see Tetsuo Najita, "Must We Copy Japan" in *The New York Review of Books*, Feb. 21, 1980, pp. 33-35.

2. This is a function of the recent reputation of such books as Richard Tanner Pascal and Anthony G. Athor, *The Art of Japanese Management* and William G. Ouchi, *Theory Z*.

3. Although Kunion Yanagida, a founder of Japanese folklore studies, already researched and pointed out this divergence in the pre-war period, Shoji Saito, *Nihonteki Shizenkan no Kenkyu* (Studies on the Japanese Outlook on Nature — Tokyo, 1979), and Masao Takatori, *Shinto Izen* (Before Shinto — Tokyo, 1979), provide the more critical and convincing approaches.

4. Chie Nakane provides this notion by means of expanding such an artificial "tradition" as if it belonged to a real unchallengeable tradition. Cf. her *Japanese Society* (1970).

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people that it has almost become the Japanese national character. Today this *structured unconsciousness* is evident in national campaigns such as the "economic growth policy," the Olympic Games, the World Fair, the oil crisis in 1973, and energy conservation programs.

Yet, the "Japanese character" developed by the *Tenno-sei* was not originally widespread. For the subordinate classes, patriarchy was less common than matriarchy and the horizontal relations were more the case than vertical-hierarchical ones. In the *Tenno-sei* campaign, the emperor was depicted as the patriarch of his people, who had kept his place in the Samurai class family. A father in principle rather than in person, an unseen, anonymous, monadic authority — the *Tenno* becomes akin to Husserl's transcendental subject.[5]

With the 1947 Constitution, the emperor was redefined as the symbol of the state. The monad of the emperor is not necessarily represented by the father of the family: *any* member of the family can be a micro-emperor! This may explain why one of the main themes of modern Japanese literature has been the escape from the family rather than patricide. Although orthodox analyses of Japanese literature saw the conflict of enlightened sons as a struggle against feudal residues, the novelists' artistic intuition unknowingly pointed out that the real problem was in the *Tenno* system itself and that assassination of the emperor would have been ineffective.[6]

After World War I, Japanese capitalism began to develop the heavy chemical industry, urbanization, mass media, mass consumption, and a liberal outlook (*taisho democracy*). Since Japan had to rapidly catch up with the more advanced capitalist countries, its economic system was unable to develop evenly in accordance with a "healthy" model of mass consumption and mass democracy. *Tenno-sei* totalitarianism thus provided the alternative that could mobilize society for accelerated productivity. Consequently, a number of emerging liberal and leftist movements of *taisho democracy* were soon suppressed. The great earthquakes of 1923 gave the authority and the right wing an opportunity to normalize the situation. Thereafter, *Tenno-sei* was so rapidly and completely embodied in Japanese society that it came to be regarded as the real folk tradition. This intensive internalization resulted in various traumas in people: not only the notorious *kamikaze* spirit of the military, but also a self-humbling and shy personality.

To the extent that *Tenno-sei* was fabricated, the *Tenno-sei* period between the Meiji restoration and the collapse of the empire had both homogenizing and destructive effects on all real traditions. Although the consequence of this was the formation of a self-destructive war machine, such an extreme homogenization also facilitated the reconstruction of the Japanese capitalist system and the development of monopoly capitalism after the surrender. Since *Tenno-sei* was a total system of politics, legislation, society, family, custom and communication, the society that it had once permeated retained a homogeneous network through which cultural capital and information could circulate. In the post-World War II period, this very convenient circuit was fully utilized to produce an Americanized consumption-oriented society. This socio-cultural change has been so drastic that pre-war travelers

5. Of course, this is a negative side of the transcendental subject that Husserl deals with in *The Crisis of the European Sciences and Transcendental Phenomenology* and *The Phenomenology of Intersubjectivity*. For a positive interpretation of this notion, see Paul Piccone, "Reading *The Crisis*" in *Telos* 8 (Summer 1971), pp. 121-129, and "Phenomenological Marxism," *Telos* 9 (Fall 1971), pp. 24ff.

6. In this sense, Naoya Shiga's *Wakai* (Reconciliation), published in 1917, which deals with a son's troubles and compromise with his father, is a function of this dilemma.

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would not be able to recognize Japan today.

Americanization began in Japan in the mid-1950s, when American advertising and marketing techniques were introduced by Dentsu Co. and a television broadcast company (NHK) began operating in 1953. Thirty years ago, no one would have imagined that Japanese society would be filled with more Americanized commodities than the United States itself. Why has everyday Japanese life been so rapidly Americanized? The main reason is that the hidden network of *Tenno-sei* has survived its explicit collapse. Since the 1950s "the American way of life" has taken over the homogenizing functions of *Tenno-sei* and continued to shape subjectivity and institutions that were ready to be colonized. This Americanization of Japanese society does not necessarily entail a similarity between Japanese and American societies, but the realization of the American ideal whereby the logic of capital becomes predominant in everyday activities.

Today in Japan even the family has become a micro-corporation. Fathers have been known to sacrifice their families to their business and a recent trend is that mothers spend a great deal of time in the office or at night school and children do so with their classmates in private "after-schools" (*juku*) — in extreme cases, in fact, children go to several "after-schools" during the day and have dinner with their families only on Sunday. In addition to this socialization of the family, television colonizes the unconscious of all family members. Economic prosperity has enabled every member of the middle class family to have his or her private room and personal television, and the living room is no longer a communal space. Married couples without children and unmarried singles are growing in numbers and are forming a new market for housing, leisure activities, daily necessities and cultural commodities. One of the most promising commodities is the narcissistic-hedonistic "individualism," embodied in the character of a recent bestseller, *Nantonaku Kurisutal* (Somehow Crystal) by Yasuo Tanaka. Popular magazines — especially women's magazines — strongly advocate "creative divorce" and the single life.

These trends are in opposition to the prevous conventional trends that stressed communal relations, so that it may lead Japan beyond the notorious *banzai* collectivity and *kamikaze* paranoia that formed the basis not only of corporate activity but also of the leftist movement during the intensive economic growth period. Consequently, a new "individual" might emerge. However, the system has erased people's diversity (i.e., the folk tradition) to the extent that it may be irredeemable for the new individual. Recently, the marketing division of Dentsu, a company that is very influential in setting Japanese socio-cultural trends, published a source book, *Kurosu Inpakuto Jidai o Ikiru* (Living in the Cross-Impact Age) forecasting new trends in values, consciousness and needs. Apparently the aim of this book is to provide an instructive set of projections for the near future rather than a scientific analysis. The book suggests that "since Japan consists of a single race and language, few are interested in the subculture on which Japanese culture is based. However, to the extent that cultural diversity is growing, it will be necessary to reconstitute the subculture." It is ironic that several types of subculture that Dentsu studied and listed have nothing to do with historic Japanese folk traditions but are artificial formations brought in exclusively by television. Apart from the possibility that such an artificial subculture might form an organic negativity — the basis for a self-emancipating subjectivity — it is obvious that the present system needs something to dismantle the increasingly homogenizing system.

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THE ORIGINS OF CRITICAL THEORY: AN INTERVIEW WITH LEO LOWENTHAL*

by Helmut Dubiel

Dubiel: "Can you tell me something about the early history of the Institute for Social Research, that is, since the time you worked at the institute? The earliest history of the institute, its formation in 1924, the history prior to its founding and the first two years of its existence have been described and documented in Paul Kluke's book *Stiftungsuniversität Frankfurt am Main*. Jay too deals with this period and thus we need not refer to it. So, tell us about the time you were at the institute.

Lowenthal: "I am not familiar with Kluke's book. Leaving aside the matter of the earlier history, the institute as we know it is clearly Horkheimer's intellectual product. It became evident early on, let us say by 1926, and surely by 1928, after Karl Grünberg's illness, that Horkheimer was to become the institute's director. In 1926 I joined the institute, but I was only employed part-time; however, I was in close intellectual contact with Horkheimer and Pollock. First, I worked on my literary-sociological essays, now collected in *Erzählkunst und Gesellschaft*. Our collaboration became more intense during 1928 and 1929, when Grünberg's retirement was expected. There now was the matter of preparing for Horkheimer's directorship; this was not simple. Horkheimer was only a *Privatdozent* and a regular professorship was a precondition for the directorship. He had not yet published much. Up to then, his only published works were his dissertation and an essay on Mannheim in the *Grünberg Archiv*."

Dubiel: "Are you referring to a critical review of Mannheim's *Ideology and Utopia*?"

Lowenthal: "Yes. One of the things that occupied us at that time was the completion of Horkheimer's *Anfänge der bürgerlichen Geschichtsphilosophie* that came out as a book in 1930. At his request, I collaborated on that a great deal. In general, my editorial labors wind like a red thread throughout my connection with the institute. In 1929, a large part of the activity at the institute was devoted to strategic planning, as it were. And we were successful: Horkheimer became a professor and director of the institute. Shall I give you some details?"

Dubiel: "No, they are contained in Kluke's book."

Lowenthal: "So, in 1930 Horkheimer became the institute's director and I became one of two full-time chief assistants — the other being Henryk Grossmann, who dates back to the Grünberg period. By saying this, I do not mean anything detrimental concerning this wonderful and distinguished man. But in matters of theory we had very little in common."

Dubiel: "During this phase, were you already planning to emigrate?"

Lowenthal: "The decision to emigrate, or rather to prepare for it, took place on September 14, 1930, when 107 National Socialists entered the Reichstag. These elections were crucial. During the previous months we did not pay much attention to the general state of the world for we were still celebrating our honeymoon at the institute. However, during 1930-31, it was becoming clear how the situation was developing. The emotional and political atmosphere was such that emigration had to be seriously considered. The day after the Reichstag elections, Felix Weil, Max Horkheimer, Fritz Pollock and myself had a serious meeting. You have seen some of

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my temperamental outbursts and in that frame of mind I told Weil: 'You must contribute the funds so that we can establish this Geneva branch; we cannot stay here any longer, we must prepare to emigrate.' The idea of a Geneva branch was Horkheimer's, but we discussed the matter together. In Geneva, Pollock knew Albert Thomas, then the director of the International Labor Office. He told him that we wished to set up there an international research office and he succeeded in winning Thomas' moral support. This was quite natural, even in terms of the Grünberg tradition of the Frankfurt Institute. A good socialist, Thomas knew and respected Grünberg. We came upon a Dutch sociologist, Andries Sternheim, who at first worked alone at that branch office and cultivated friendly relations with the International Labor Office. That this Geneva branch was to be the meeting point for our emigration was not to be publicized. Therefore, we followed normal routines: Horkheimer went to Geneva frequently, so did Pollock; sometimes I did too. The university was to get the impression that this branch concerned a bona fide institution. Also, since 1931 we shifted the foundation's funds from Germany to the Netherlands. At the Deutsche Bank in Frankfurt we only kept a credit letter that barely covered the institute's monthly requirements. This is why the Nazis didn't get anything from us. Only one of the employees who had forgotten to pick up her check early enough lost that money. We compensated her for it. We donated our library to the London School of Economics — a library which, through Grünberg, had become a choice collection of documents in the history of the labor movement and had been expanded by Horkheimer with innumerable valuable texts on philosophy and cultural history. Organizationally, this was difficult to carry out. First, the library had to be transferred to a Swiss society whose name I have forgotten. This society, made up mainly of a Swiss advisory council with one of us as a member, then transferred the library to the London School of Economics, whose director, Sir William Beveridge, accepted the donation. Thus, when the Nazis came, the London School of Economics would be able to save the library. You know that this did not work out. Herr Ribbentrop told the British ambassador that we were a bunch of communists and so the British did not make any effort to save the library from the National Socialists' attacks. Eventually, during the war, the library went up in flames. It may even have burned, through an irony of history, because of the British bombing."

Dubiel: "As far as Europe is concerned, the international reputation of your institute was almost meteoric, judging from the famous names among the *Zeitschrift's* reviewers."

Lowenthal: "Everyone we invited to lecture at the institute did come: Aron, Husserl."

Dubiel: "How come?"

Lowenthal: "Perhaps because of the stipend and the honor. Our guests were lavishly received, and the University of Frankfurt had a certain splendour. Through Horkheimer's skill and personality, we had excellent relations with the university's curator, rector, and its leading intellectual figures, such as Paul Tillich. You must also recall that many of the talented left-wing students were drawn to the institute. We organized seminars on Hegel and Marx that drew large crowds — although no credit was given. Also important were the connections with the Piscator Theater, Malik Verlag and the Marx-Engels Verlagsanstalt. As you must know, the institute was dubbed the 'Café Marx,' first in a friendly fashion, later not so friendly."

Dubiel: "Can you tell me more about the emigration?"

Lowenthal: "As I already told you, unlike others, we realized early on how quickly terror would spread in Germany. Many were naive and because of their narrow academic interests they refused to recognize the catastrophic situation in Germany.

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Later they paid bitterly for it. I was the last one to leave the institute and Frankfurt — on March 2, 1933. On March 5, the SA occupied the building. Then we read that grotesque article in the Nazi press I showed you, listing the horrible things they found in the institute — including the sadistic correspondence with my mistresses— We had made connections with Bouglé in Paris. He had been one of Durkheim's students. He immediately offered to set up a branch at the Sorbonne. He also facilitated relations with the Félix Alcan Verlag, which offered to take over our *Zeitschrift*. Then we also decided to form a branch in London at the Institute of Sociology in the Le Play House. This policy of forming branches was part of our tactics. We were like the child that had been burned once; we were not too sure about our situation in Switzerland. We needed our branch in Paris because our publisher was there. The London branch, in turn, was a gathering place in case things would not work out in Switzerland. You know how the history of Switzerland during the Hitler period was not exactly a glorious one. You have to imagine our situation in Geneva. Only Horkheimer had an unlimited residency permit, so that he could have a home and move his furniture there. Neither Pollock, nor Marcuse nor I could do this. We had to keep our libraries and furniture in a bonded warehouse. We remained visitors. We had only tourist visas and every few weeks or so we had to go across the border to Bellegarde and re-enter with a new visa. And there was much more. We often found that Jewish emigrants were closely scrutinized: in their case, regulations were enforced most strictly. We saw this as an indication that fascism would eventually spread to all of Europe. At that time we still did not think about a war. Then there was the matter of the United States. Julian Gumperz, Pollock's assistant, was an American and Erich Fromm had already been in the U.S. And so the idea of emigrating there gained ground. There were invitations from leading universities such as Chicago and Columbia. We decided in favor of Columbia on the naive ground that New York was closer to Europe. We knew very little about the United States. We thought that one could not take a walk in Central Park, although at the time one could still do so. Columbia University was quite generous: organizationally and legally they offered us the same conditions we had enjoyed in Frankfurt. We turned into the Institute of Social Research affiliated with Columbia University and obtained a house on University Heights that we kept up to the late 1940s. The move to the U.S. took place in 1934. Horkheimer and his wife were the first to leave, then Marcuse, then I, then Pollock, and finally our wives and children. Fromm was already there. One of the complications we ran into in New York was the publishing of the *Zeitschrift*. It was still put out by Alcan in Paris and it was therefore important to send the material promptly to Paris. I recall how many times, late at night, I rushed by car to the post office so that material would reach the *Ile de France* or another ship in time. There was no air mail service yet."

Dubiel: "Did you have someone in the Paris branch arrange for the final editing of the *Zeitschrift* before going to press?"

Lowenthal: "At first the Paris branch was managed by Paul Honigsheim. He was a left-wing Catholic and had been a professor in Cologne. When Honigsheim left for the U.S. he was succeeded by a Dr. Brill, who did a good job looking after the *Zeitschrift*. The Paris branch lasted until the Nazis marched into the city. Because we did not know English — Horkheimer and Pollock had a smattering of it, Marcuse and I hardly anything — it was necessary to get help with the language. We were lucky: through academic recommendations we were able to hire two young men who later became important scholars. One of them, M.I. Finley, today is one of the most important classical scholars in Cambridge and a friend of mine. The second was the late Benjamin Nelson, who became a professor at the New School for Social Research.

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Part of my activity in New York was devoted to developing the *Zeitschrift*'s review section. Among other things, this section was an important means of financial aid to intellectual emigrants. If you leaf through the journal, you see many well-known names. We also commissioned and paid for many reviews knowing full well that we could not or would not publish them. Recently, looking through some of my old papers, I came across an exchange with Kurt Goldstein, an outstanding psychiatrist. In the letter I confirmed that I was sending him an honorarium of nine dollars. Don't be surprised at that. Do you know what secretaries were making then? Fourteen dollars a week. This is why we had good secretaries: at that time, in Wall Street, they would have earned only twelve dollars. That was during the Depression. We were not well aware of that. We were so concerned with building our own German island that we nearly forgot what terrible times America was going through. Well, we remained an island, you may be sure of that."

Dubiel: "It seems to me — and this is shared also by Americans who had intellectual contacts with you — that the most important period of your life and intellectually the most formative was that which you spent at the institute. I think that this was true of all members. Do you agree?"

Lowenthal: "I certainly do. At any rate, as far as I am concerned, this extended for almost a quarter of a century; I was at it from 1926 to 1949. True, during the first years, I mean in the late 1920s, I was still teaching high school, but my intellectual home was the institute. And at the end, in the late 1940s, I was living all alone in New York. But, as you know from the huge correspondence with Horkheimer and Adorno, my contacts were still active."

Dubiel: "When we look at all of those formative impulses that you got from this group, as a whole, what can you separate out from that whole? What have you brought along in style, intellectual habits, theoretical approaches, ways of evaluating traditions, choices of books?"

Lowenthal: "Well, that's quite a big question. Within the institute and not just in the person of Max Horkheimer, I further developed my view of the world, of nature and of life. Of course, the basis for this was already there, characterized essentially by a concern for independence. This is best captured by our slogan of not playing the game. The institute's intellectual tradition has made it possible for me to achieve a satisfactory synthesis between my philosophical, literary, sociological and hedonistic feelings. In a sense, I have relived my student years at the institute. My first years there were also a sort of anticipated utopia: we were different and we knew the world better. In the last analysis, the whole thing was quite extraordinary. First of all, Horkheimer's becoming the director and the founding of a new periodical represented something new. The *Zeitschrift für Sozialforschung* was like Karl Kraus' *Die Fackel*, although not written by one person, but buy a group working closely together. Then there was our ability to foresee the decline of the Weimar Republic and to prepare our flight abroad, along with our insight that the spread of fascism was more likely than a world war. We had gone to the U.S. and dared to build a German radical-intellectual island. This in itself was already significant. If I were to list all this in detail, it would result in a unique intellectual unity, political world view and an imagination molded by high bourgeois Jewish lifestyle. None of us believed that all this would be confirmed by the reputation earned by the Frankfurt group. Nor do I think now how I am happy about all this. I really do not know whether this 'integration' pays off. But there it is. First of all, it was a miracle we survived and were able to overcome all the obstacles to emigration to finally — from the 1950s on — rise up once more from the ashes like a phoenix. For we have really become an ineradicable part of Western spiritual life. In a

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certain sense it also extends to political life. This is my long reply to a big question."

Dubiel: "What has often surprised me is the astounding certainty, an almost instinctual deep-seated self-assurance in the arrangement of theoretical works. In all of you, I feel an extraordinarily precise topography, a very detailed theoretical map on the basis of which every theoretical task can be quickly identified both as to its immanent quality as well as its intellectual-political relevance."

Lowenthal: "You remind me of my first words in the address that I gave in 1974 on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the Institute for Social Research in Frankfurt. At that time I pointed to the *Zeitschrift's* format to explain the meaning of critical theory: i.e., a perspective, a common critical basic attitude toward all cultural phenomena without ever claiming to be a system. The *Zeitschrift* contains the critical programs of the founding fathers, if I may call them such, on philosophy, economics, psychology, music and literature. Critical theory must be understood as nothing but such a collective denominator — an expression, by the way, that we never used with such emphasis during the first 20 years, as it may appear to posterity. This is my reply: it is a perspective. This is the reason I find it so funny when someone requests that we offer a seminar on critical theory. I never know how to deal with that. I usually call my friend Martin Jay and ask him what are the main characteristics of the so-called critical theory. Now I'll ask you. After all, you wrote a book about it."

Dubiel: "It is really impossible to come up with a few general remarks and to say: this is critical theory. In the case of so-called traditional theories, this is frequently possible. With the aid of given central premises one can derive one's own hypotheses. For a while I claimed that critical theory was a myth invented by second-rate men of letters in league with publishers' policies, but that this did not correspond to anything. But now that I know you better, I feel that it is also a personally representative, not always generalizable form of living and thinking. On the one hand, I feel privileged to be able to participate in it with you and, on the other, I resist such identification of a personal physiognomy with a theoretical tradition. I find it difficult to give up the idea that theoretical theses must also be transposable epistemologically and that they must not exhaust themselves in the authenticity of a person. For this reason I reiterate my question: the search for the symptomatic characteristics of what is known as critical theory."

Lowenthal: "Well, there is something that is codified, in particular Horkheimer's great essay on critical and traditional theory and Marcuse's supplementary essay. But I should like to say something else. Recently, in one of my seminars, one of my most gifted students attacked our group, saying that our attitude was Olympian: that we had separated ourselves completely from Marxism and had lost sight of reality. I replied that such criticism missed the meaning of critical theory: we had not abandoned praxis, but praxis had abandoned us. I have often talked about the great trauma represented by the developments in the Soviet Union and the Communist Party. But of far greater importance was the insight that the idea of the proletariat's revolutionary potential had been overtaken by history. This was particularly clear in the U.S. and now also throughout the world. Here, as well as in most of Western Europe, the so-called proletariat is formed by a petty-bourgeois group with a massive interest in the status quo. Well, all right, in a mediating sense critical theory was always in favor of praxis. The essential difference between critical and traditional theory was this: the problems that we worked on, whether it was the critique of liberalism or of phenomenology, literature, or music, were determined by the given historical situation. Our main interest was not methodology but the attempt to analyze critically those tendencies and movements that stood in the way of re-establishing a

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possible unity between politics and theory. So, critical theory did not in the least regard itself as esoteric; its most crucial feature was a reflection on the relation between theory and praxis."

Dubiel: "You have answered such a reproach concerning critical theory's lack of practical political interests by saying that today's labor movement has itself lost its head; that the separation of theory and practice was the fault of praxis."

Lowenthal: "I recall having heard in intellectual and personal conversations the reproach that one could not always be critical, but that sometimes one should also be constructive. We were always scandalous and trouble-makers. You are familiar with Kästner's reply when he was confronted with this insufferable foolishness: 'Herr Kästner, and what about the positive?' Well, it is exactly the negative that was the positive: this consciousness of not going along, the refusal. The essence of critical theory is really the inexorable analysis of what is.

"Although I do not agree with Horkheimer's excessively religious symbolism during his last years when he referred to the 'completely other' with the name of God who must not be named, this points to something that unites us. What man can do in freedom should not be anticipated and one must always say no to what is happening because it is not happening in freedom. We cannot get out of Hegel's antithetical position. How could we really do this? After all, the synthesis is to be made by the subjects themselves. We are collaborators during the negative phase of the dialectical process. It is this that holds us together and has given us so much strength. It has helped us avoid seduction by reality. This does not mean that we do not know how to enjoy the good things of life such as intellectual gifts, good wine and everything else. Yet, none of us has ever succumbed to the Faustian warning: 'I will say to the moment: stay, you are so beautiful.' "

Dubiel: "When I use the word 'attitude' I do not mean it negatively. After all, this attitude of critical distance developed on the basis of historical experiences and was not present originally. During the early 1930s, when you designated your theoretical direction as still materialist, you felt that, at least morally, you still belonged to the labor movement. This definitely changed in 1936 (I mention this date because of Horkheimer's classical essay). Since then you considered yourself what Adorno has called the *Flaschenpost* (a bottle with a message thrown into the sea) — a lonely, marginal group critically examining the course of the world."

Lowenthal: "I agree with that."

Dubiel: "I want to go back to the question of the core of critical theory. Clearly, that question cannot be readily answered. There are many different perspectives from which one can view critical theory."

Lowenthal: "If it were a dogma, the question could be readily answered. In fact, this question derives from a positivistic way of thinking, even though it may be asked by well-meaning people."

Dubiel: "Let us stay with it. Can you characterize your group's theoretical orientation as compared to what you stood for in Frankfurt in 1930? How would you describe yourselves in relation to that frequently mechanistic, even historically unreflected materialism of people such as Grünberg and Wittfogel — and even Henryk Grossmann. When one compares the tables of contents of the last issue of Grünberg's *Archiv für die Geschichte des Sozialismus und der Arbeiterbewegung* with the program of the *Zeitschrift für Sozialforschung*, one is surprised by your shift towards problems of philosophy and cultural critique, and, in general, superstructural problems."

Lowenthal: "Yes, there is no doubt about that. The emphasis did shift to

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superstructural problems, but not entirely. Don't forget the works of Pollock and his co-workers. Especially during the 1940s were the politico-economic, rather politico-logical works of Pollock and Neumann crucial to us. I am referring to the theory of state capitalism and *Behemoth*. Even Grossmann's earlier theoretical conviction that the collapse was imminent is part of that context, as a counterweight to the program of a materialistic philosophy of culture. But these works were not the core. This is also connected with personnel contingencies, mental abilities and outspokenness within the circle."

Dubiel: "Let us now turn to the relation to Marxism. In West Germany, and even more here in the U.S., critical theory is seen as an enlightened version of Marxism."

Lowenthal: "That was never abandoned. I would even go further and say that critical theory is a progressive form of Marxism that no longer mechanically accepts Marxist categories in changed historical situations. The theory of emiseration, the unmediated reduction of the superstructure to the base, the theory of the crash as the theory of the fall in the rate of profit have all turned out to be untenable. But basic Marxist themes have never been abandoned. The hypothesis that world history can be described as the result of the struggle between outer and inner nature, the theory of productive forces and class relations, have never been given up. What have been abandoned are certain economistic categories and predictions that have proven to be wrong. That was entirely in Marx's spirit. He always referred to tendencies and counter-tendencies. You are right: interests turned toward a cultural area neglected by the Marxist tradition, e.g., psychology. Psychology does not exist in classical Marxism and so we have surely added something to that theory. This, of course, does not fit into that petty-bourgeois catechism of Marxism as proposed by Bukharin. Thus, if the Russian tradition is seen as the legitimate successor of Marxism, then we have not been Marxists."

Dubiel: "Many things follow from this. The theoretical development of Marxism cannot be separated from the practical movements that appeal to it. Your Marxism was defined by opposition to the Social-Democratic and Bolshevik versions of Marxism. Other perspectives could be chosen to represent critical theory, e.g., its relation to the Enlightenment tradition."

Lowenthal: "Indeed! Like the young Marx, we have always considered ourselves critical continuators of the radical Enlightenment tradition."

Dubiel: "Do you see the theoretical and intellectual development of the Frankfurt circle between 1930 and 1950 as in some way typical of, say, the socialist intelligentsia between the two world wars or of emigré intellectuals?

Lowenthal: "No. We were completely alone: it was a unique story. Please do not consider it presumptuous, but we did not wish to be typical. Of course there were schools, e.g., the logical positivists, but they had no political purpose."

Dubiel: "How about comparing you with clearly political groups, such as the SPD in exile? I am referring to the *Neu Beginnen* group."

Lowehthal: "We cannot be compared to these groups."

Dubiel: "So, the uniqueness of your group seems to lie in its being between clear political groups on the one hand and scholarly groups on the other."

Lowenthal: "Perhaps the psychoanalytical movement can be roughly compared to ours. But this too would be inaccurate. Such groups must always be seen in terms of specific political constellations. Because of our interdisciplinary orientation and collaboration within our political philosophy our beginning was extraordinary. As emigrés we sought to uphold that tradition; the only progressive voice of German intellectual life. Adorno's phrase of *Flaschenpost* hits this on the head. In the 1960s, of course, all of us were surprised at the pop made by this bottle when it was uncorked.

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But we all reacted differently."

Dubiel: "There is another question I want to ask: You were not a homogeneous group. What subgroups or fractions were there, and what conflicts did this give rise to?"

Lowenthal: "In the 1930s the basic conflict involved the Soviet Union and the trials. There was quite a split about that and it frequently resulted in heated conversations and unpleasant scenes. The defenders of the Soviet Union were Wittfogel, Grossmann and Bloch — although the latter was not strictly a member of our group. It went so far that one of these three called us the 'pigs on 117th Street' (that was where our Columbia house was located). I can still remember one such scene involving Horkheimer, Marcuse, Wittfogel and myself. It took place at a luncheon in a New York restaurant, the Tip-Toe Inn. In the course of our conversation, Horkheimer remarked that it would not surprise him if an alliance developed between Hitler and Stalin if Hitler made only the least overture. At this, Wittfogel leaped up as if bitten by a tarantula, threw his napkin onto the table in a rage, threw out some insulting remarks that I shall not repeat, and left the restaurant in a huff. We even had to pay his bill. We had various scenes like this one at the institute itself because he constantly sought to justify the trials — and he was not the only one.

"The disappointment over what took place in the Soviet Union and in the states that called themselves communist is a key to our political development. For instance, when people say that fascism and communism are the same, I disagree. Soviet communism is a perversion of a theory, of a moral system and a style of thought that is essentially good. Hitler's fascism, on the other hand, is bad for the very reason that its basic conception of man is inhuman. A Jew can never be saved while a capitalist can freely declassify himself and convert into a new religion. That this does not happen in practice is not the fault of Marxist philosophy."

Dubiel: "Now I should like to touch on a subject that would have been obsolete but which has been raised once again in the recently published biography of Benjamin by Werner Fuld. You know better than I the background of that accusation, going back over a decade, that during the late 1930s the institute had practically blackmailed Benjamin ideologically with threats to cut off funds to make him give up his allegedly strict Marxist course. There are certain forms of malice against which even the most honest arguments are powerless. That's why this legend is still alive today. Can you say anything about it?"

Lowenthal: "I feel extremely sad about it. On the basis of our conversations, the documents and the correspondence that you have seen, you could have convinced yourself that, in terms of its relatively limited funds, the institute did indeed spend large sums in helping emigré intellectuals. Walter Benjamin was one of those who from the very outset, and uninterruptedly, benefited from this solidaristic activity of the institute. It is true that Benjamin was not a formal member of the institute. But he was a close friend of Adorno and his wife, and we all knew him well. Since the Frankfurt days and since his aborted attempt to habitate, we were personally in almost constant contact with him and, later, through letters. As you know, Benjamin always remained a seeker, a doubter and a lone wolf; he had strong moral and intellectual ties to Zionism, to communism, to aesthetic theory, to Jewish mysticism and to literature. He had an extraordinarily complex relation to art in modern society and to the role of popular culture and mass media. It was unavoidable that the intellectual motifs of such a many-sided and brilliant person were frequently contradictory and this sometimes brought him into conflict with those close to him. All this is well documented in his correspondence with Adorno. I myself had an argument with him over Knut Hamsum, although he later admitted I was right.

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We were glad that Benjamin regularly wrote articles for the *Zeitschrift*. He was not an acceptable co-worker, but someone who intellectually, if not physically, belonged to our group even if he lived on the other side of the Atlantic. Of course, it was easier — after all, you know how the *Zeitschrift* was edited — to deal with a co-worker in the New York office in making changes and adjustments relating to differences of opinion. Unfortunately, Benjamin was far from the scene. It was Adorno's main task to look over Benjamin's essays and to correspond with him about them. All of us, of course, also read them and discussed them directly with Benjamin or through Adorno. Correspondence may, at times, have a more irreversible and quarrelsome effect than conversation, in which misunderstandings can be immediately removed. The charge that we blackmailed Benjamin has been raised by the journal *Alternative*. The DDR has added its bit to it, and, unfortunately, so did Gershom Scholem and Hannah Arendt — both of whom I greatly respect.

"This matter is especially painful for me because now I am the only survivor who, from an intimate knowledge of the entire affair, can say that an infamous distortion was afoot here. The institute has never politically censored its co-workers. Of course, we discussed editorial changes and proposed them to the authors. As far as Benjamin was concerned, we always secured his approval for this. You will look in vain for a letter from Benjamin in which he protests against any alleged deletion by us. By the way, at the request of Rolf Tiedemann, the editor of Benjamin's works, I wrote him a letter that is reprinted in the second part of Volume I of Benjamin's *Gesammelte Schriften*. In that letter I described how we handled editorial matters and stated that the imputation of political censorship was downright grotesque. It was true — as the managing editor of *Zeitschrift* I plead guilty — that at times we stylistically reformulated certain expressions that might have been misunderstood politically: but this was always with the approval of the authors in question. This involved all of us, including Horkheimer, Adorno, Pollock, Marcuse, and myself; none of us was spared. But we only did this because our *Zeitschrift* was in essence the mouthpiece of critical theory and we were pursuing a clear, unified, philosophical, scientific and political line. At any rate, the charge that we were making arbitrary changes behind an author's back or even that we financially blackmailed a man like Benjamin is an insult to the members of the institute, not least to Benjamin himself. To claim that he had put up with changes in his essays in order not to endanger a modest financial assistance is a posthumous insult to Benjamin. I hope that I have contributed something to burying this legend at last.

Dubiel: "Now I wish to touch on another complex matter. When we met a few years ago we talked about it, but could never agree. As you know, I have a very definite picture of the theoretical pioneering work of your group during the Frankfurt period before Hitler; I mean this project of an interdisciplinary social science. Generally speaking, when one engages in theory one always seeks to transpose particular theoretical efforts into an overall framework. What has fascinated me in some texts — especially in Horkheimer's inaugural address, in the preface to the *Zeitschrift für Sozialforschung*, and in various passages Horkheimer wrote about the dialectic — was this project, which Horkheimer called 'the theory of the historical course.' This reveals an intention to provide a theory of the present historical process by social scientific methods, in the best sense of that term. Was that really so?"

Lowenthal: Quite correct up to now. At the end of the 1920s and the beginning of the 1930s a metaphysical and basically anti-historical reaction occurred in Germany: Nicolai Hartmann, Max Scheler, Jung's psychology, Klages' influence and this whole configuration of new eternity philosophies and their anti-historical impact. Early Nazi ideology was also an ahistorical, pseudo-metaphysical play with history and society.

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What our group sought was to trace the achieved historical self-consciousness. Our theoretical agenda was the working out of a critical historical consciousness. Is this what you are after?"
Dubiel: "That's it. But there was something else. What fascinated me about it was not only the intention but particularly the operational aspect."
Lowenthal; "Well, that's what really took place."
Dubiel: "How did it happen?"
Lowenthal: "In the broad study about Rhineland workers and employees. There was an attempt to do that and this connected with the question of what holds a society together in a post-feudal period, i.e., the social-psychological cement of that society. The operational plan was to carry out research concerning authority. It was unorthodox in the history of organized intellectual and academic life to have brought together philosophy, technical and scientific reflections and translate them into research. After all, we had learned from Marx that the theoretical requires the empirical, as well as the reverse. So, the unity of theory and empirical research was something we assumed from the outset. But we were no longer able to do much about it except that our interpretation of events enabled us to save our lives."
Dubiel: "You have now spelled it out. There was the attempt to unite general theoretical perspectives with detailed empirical work. So, there was the goal of integrating philosophy with the various particular scientific approaches. Well, that's fine. All I want to know now is to what extent this methodology was made explicit. Did you discuss this epistemology together or were these Horkheimer's views?"
Lowenthal: "That's difficult for me to answer. All of that tends towards an organizational form..."
Dubiel: "And it is exactly this that you and Marcuse have always argued against."
Lowenthal: "All of this took place rather informally; it was not organized."
Dubiel: "If there was such a methodology as part of the basic principles shared by all, then it must have been somewhere."
Lowenthal: "Well, if you really want to know, it came through more in the editorial preliminary work and in the conferences over the studies to be published in the *Zeitschrift*."
Dubiel: "That's what I thought."
Lowenthal: "There you would hear such phrases as, 'you cannot put it that way,' or 'we mean this in a different sense,' or 'we do not use such an expression,' or, 'this expression we employ differently,' etc. This is how the language of critical theory began. In common theoretical work a collective opinion emerged within our group."
Dubiel: "All right. In that language were you aware of that project I call the fusion of philosophy and special sciences, and the integration of the special sciences themselves? Perhaps it was really through organized research by way of various personally assigned roles. So that Marcuse's task was in technical philosophy, Lowenthal in literature, Adorno in music, Pollock in economics while Horkheimer worked out the synthesis in his programmatic essays. Could one picture your editorial sessions as having that formal structure?"
Lowenthal: "It did not take place that formally. There was no such planning of our work in that Marcuse, for instance, would write an essay on political philosophy, Adorno on music and I on literature. Each one of us worked in a definite field on the assumption that something would eventually come out of it for the *Zeitschrift* and for our common theoretical perspectives. What you are imputing as the special competence of each one of us was valid only for music. There Adorno was indeed the 'specialist' whom none of us could match. But in other areas the situation was different

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because none of us was entirely ignorant of what everyone else was doing. Horkheimer was very knowledgeable in philosophy, but also in political sociology, in literature, in psychology and in history. The same was true of Marcuse, Teddy and myself. Although specialists in the narrower sense, Pollock and Fromm were also highly cultured. None of us had chosen narrow fields of study at the university. This was a good requirement for our collaboration."

Dubiel: "Well, I think my hunch was correct."

Lowenthal: "In many cases our conversations stimulated further works by some of us. I think I have already told you how I came to write my essay on Hamsun. In conversation with Horkheimer and Marcuse the latter claimed that Hamsun was the greatest living novelist. At that point I began to curse something awful and stated categorically that Hamsun was a fascist. Horkheimer then proposed that I explain this in an essay. Until then, in 1934, there were still no leads on that subject. And so this study came about, as did many others, through conversations. When Mortimer Adler wrote his history of culture from Aristotle to the movies, Horkheimer thought that this was a good opportunity to clarify our theory of popular culture. That's how the essay 'Art and Popular Culture' came into being. Again: in my essay on Hamsun there is a long footnote signed by Hektor Rottweiler — Adorno's pseudonym. In it he brings out that in Sibelius' music the same motifs reappear as in Hamsun's works. You can see from this how careful we were in reading one another's essays."

Dubiel: "Now I want to ask you about *Autorität und Familie*. Basically, this was the grand project you prepared together?"

Lowenthal: "Yes, *Studien über Autorität und Familie* is a beautiful example of this type of collaboration. The idea was to study authority as the cement of society, i.e., the idea missing in Marx: a theory of the mediating psychic links between base and superstructure. We asked ourselves whether there were mechanisms other than the pure use of force to explain conformity. A theory of the family as a social agency was formulated by Fromm in terms of Freudian theory. It appeared theoretically and empirically promising to investigate the family as a matrix of what authority meant in modern society. The very title expresses the unity of our interests."

Dubiel: "Would this project's end result have been different if history had been other than what it was and you had not been forced to emigrate? In other words, if you had had sufficient time and resources to carry the studies to the conclusions intended?"

Lowenthal: "I think so."

Dubiel: "Would you say that the volume that appeared was only a sort of report on the work in progress?"

Lowenthal: "That's right. The work was uneven. Yet, the first part containing the theory of authority in modern society — a survey of the treatment of authority in philosophy from the Renaissance to the present time and a socio-psychological discussion of authority with special reference to the family — would presumably have remained unchanged in a more developed version of the project. I myself would have probably written a larger contribution on how this problem was reflected in literature. And were it not for Hitler, the empirical research would have included additional sections and would not have restricted itself to the study of workers and employees in the Rhineland. It would have extended to other regions such as Bavaria or east of the Elbe river. Had we had the means and the personnel, we would have undertaken comparative studies in non-German countries. In a more refined version, we would have either omitted the third part of that study or have structured it differently. That part contains a wealth of reports on the literature written by persons from outside our circle and was devised largely as a means of supporting colleagues in distress because of

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emigration. And perhaps all of this might have developed in such a way that the *Zeitschrift für Sozialforschung* would have published research reports on other inquiries. The book was not very successful. But how could it have been otherwise? It was a huge work printed in German in 1935 by Alcan in Paris! It turned out to be a somewhat damaged 'bottle post.' I must reiterate: we never believed in fame and never sought it. But we all shared Adorno's urge to publish the work in German in spite of an uncertain future. In a sense, that publication as well as the *Zeitschrift* was a piece of work by emigrés conceived in sadness and filled with hope."

Dubiel: "Your reply to my query as to how the *Studien über Autorität und Familie* would have turned out had history not intervened with fascism strikes me as a little too pragmatic. My question should have been more subtle. I was in fact alluding to Horkheimer's formulation in the preface to *Studien*. In a passage referring to the crude character of the overall undertaking, Horkheimer says that it 'would be possible for the issues involved in the investigations to disclose their true significances only in an all-embracing theory of social life with which it is bound up.' What about this formulation?"

Lowenthal: "This was the principle for continuing to differentiate our individual works to the point of obtaining a theory of society, but surely it would not have led to the writing of a volume entitled *Theorie der Gesellschaft*."

Dubiel: "So, this formulation was only an option for some sort of theoretical utopia."

Lowenthal: "Well, yes, what we meant was a theoretically adequate approach — a successful grasping of the whole mechanism of modern society."

Dubiel: "But couldn't Horkheimer's formulation be interpreted differently? Let me translate this formulation my way: 'The volume at hand is a preliminary component of the theory of the historical process.' When one mentions a part and a whole in a methodology, individual operations and anticipated overall view, then there must be rules about their interconnection. There would have to be the formulation of a methodological parameter by which one could gauge the progress of the historical development up to the point of a theory of historical movement."

Lowenthal: "I don't think so. You are attributing to all of us foreign theoretical motives. All this would be aimed at a system whereas Horkheimer's style, as well as that of Adorno, was already in the direction of aphorisms."

Dubiel: "For the period we are talking about, the 1930s, I would simply question whether the aphoristic form would have been adequate to Horkheimer's way of thinking. Besides, I do not mean to ascribe to your group a systematic approach. What interests me is what a methodology and a research technique look like and perhaps also the literary form of a scientific work elaborated on the basis of a 'concrete totality' — the theory of the historical process."

Lowenthal: "Well, here it is. In reality, Horkheimer never wrote such a book. This is not an accident. You may collect essays, as has already been done, choose a title for publication purposes and call it *Critical Theory*. And, yet, this will not provide a systematic theory."

Dubiel: "My dear Leo, I am going to stop pressing that point. I want to touch on other problems: questions of the continuity and discontinuity in the biography of your theory. When we talked about difficulties with locating constants that might characterize critical theory, we established that each theoretical contribution was interwoven in the historical moment. If that is so, then the theory changes with its subject. In that sense, critical theory is not a set of tenets that can be applied any time, but only at a particular historical juncture."

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Lowenthal: "That's very much in the Marxist tradition! Humanity sets for itself only those tasks which it can solve. The task we set for ourselves at that time was the analysis of the social situation in which we found ourselves, in particular, the situation in Germany and Central Europe."

Dubiel: "Good. In the preparatory work for my book on your group, I read the texts in the following order. With regard to fascism, for instance, I have culled and documented all pertinent passages in letters and all allusions in theoretical texts and entered them on a time scale from 1930 to 1945. It was then that I came upon some interesting points. Although it was the year of your emigration, 1933 did not seem the break that it is considered in contemporary historical writing. Your group saw a much stronger continuity between the last years of the Weimar Republic, especially since 1931, and the first years of Hitler's rule than is normally understood. In other words, fascism came gliding in. You did not experience Hitler's chancellorship as a historical watershed. According to your views at that time, fascism developed gradually out of monopoly-capitalist conditions. And this theory of fascism as the adequate political form of highly developed monopoly capitalism also determined your historical perception. I recall a letter Marcuse wrote to Horkheimer in which, on the occasion of Horkheimer's essay in *Studien über Autorität und Familie*, he discussed the question of periodization. There (in 1934), alluding by analogy to the National Socialists, Marcuse stated that this fascist bunch of gangsters did not necessarily introduce a qualitatively new epoch. Later on, all of you, especially Marcuse, became much more skeptical. A good document is the 1939 essay 'Die Juden und Europa.' That essay still assumed that fascism was a great force in Europe before the war. I was surprised to learn that in 1939 there were eleven states in Europe with fascist or quasi-fascist governments. In addition, many of the 'still' democratic states had strong fascist movements. Under these historical circumstances your group must have considered fascism as, indeed, a quasi-universal historical phenomenon — something you share with many contemporary and exiled historians — and the political-economic interpretation of fascism gradually disappeared. Other explanations then came on the scene: a global historical-philosophical one in the *Dialectic of the Enlightenment,* and a socio-psychological one in the later *Studies in Prejudice.* What I want to ask is this: Would you agree that your interpretation of fascism developed from a political-economic one to a global historical-philosophical and later to a socio-psychological one?"

Lowenthal: "I'm afraid you are wrong. This is the first time in our conversations that my opinion differs drastically from yours. I have no idea how you have reached this interpretation. It only seems correct because it indeed reflects the views of some people within our circle, but never that of the hard core that determined the institute's theoretical orientation."

Dubiel: "Relax, Leo. I need hardly tell you that I am alluding to Marcuse's beautiful essay on liberalism and Pollock's first two essays in the *Zeitschrift.*"

Lowenthal: "Well, Marcuse had not been at the institute in 1930 and 1931. Pollock did have such tendencies but, thank God, we were able to prevail on him. Horkheimer, Fromm and I have never believed or stated that fascism was merely — as you put it — a new political strategy of monopoly capitalism. None of us ever said this."

Dubiel: "But now I will cite you chapter and verse. Today, what writer has become a classical reference of a most solid and pregnant formulation in almost all theoretical texts on the interpretation of fascism along capitalist lines? Which writer do you think?"

Lowenthal: "Neumann?"

Dubiel: "No, it is Horkheimer. The most pregnant thesis I know by heart: 'If you do not

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want to talk about capitalism, then you must also not mention fascism.' "
Lowenthal: "This had a different meaning: One should not grovel before the U.S."
Dubiel: "One should not grovel before a social order that likewise tends to give rise to fascism. As a highly developed capitalist country, the U.S. is not immune from fascism. This is what Horkheimer meant. You must be familiar with another passage where he gives a political-economic interpretation of anti-Semitism. Similarly, there he states that fascist anti-Semitism was a sequel of the liquidation of the circulation phase in highly developed capitalism. If this is not an economic interpretation of fascism, then I don't know..."
Lowenthal: "This can also be expressed differently. After all, fascism is not just another manifestation of high finance. Once it comes on the historical arena it represents a qualitatively new social order. It is not only the intention of monopoly capitalism to exterminate the Jews and to execute the gypsies and the insane or to plot a world war. These passages in Horkheimer must be viewed dialectically. National socialism must not be interpreted as a continuation of the economic stategy by high finance, as was done by Franz Neumann; nor must fascism be reduced to an independent petty-bourgeois mythology that accidentally seizes and maintains power. Both tendencies are seen as unequal partners in an overall historical process. It became clear to us all, even before January 31, 1933, that a new quality of political life had begun. This is why we emigrated. This is why we believed that political normalcy would not continue to dominate or that high finance would not continue to dominate or that high finance would eventually cast off small businessmen when it no longer needed them. But this does not mean giving up the theory of a class society organized by finance capital. The logic of events had probably driven both wings, big capital and the Hitler power apparatus, to unleash the world war. In spite of the terrible sacrifices, I sometimes say: thank God! I believe I already told you this story: When I took a walk with Horkheimer in the summer of 1934, he said that fascism in Germany had its good sides, namely, the politicization of society. In Germany there had never been such an extensive politicization of the entire population. People now found that what happened in the political sphere concerned them directly, and this meant an end to public apathy as a characteristic of German political life concerning which I have written frequently. Such a politicization of the population is contrary to the interests and ideology of big capital."
Dubiel: "This is only a marginal note: Is it not surprising that this apathy should immediately have reappeared after 1945 more strongly than ever in German history?"
Lowenthal: "This only proves our thesis that fascism creates a new political context characterized by the total mobilization of society, where everyone is a fellow prisoner, fellow culprit and conscious fellow traveler of the political order. When this authoritarian and totalitarian terror apparatus disappears, the society falls back into public apathy, everywhere and not only in Germany. Fascism has not succeeded in politicizing the American nation. During World War II the population here was as non-political and uninvolved as ever. Let me repeat: this economistic interpretation is one-sided. We surely would not have feared to remain in Switzerland only because big capital was in power. We feared that a specifically fascist political quality would arise in Europe and that one could no longer be secure in one's inner and outer life."
Dubiel: "So, we have a reformulation: developed capitalist societies produce the socio-economic conditions under which fascism can develop. But when the political apparatus of the society organized by capital has fallen into fascist hands, that system takes on a new quality no longer compatible with the interests of finance capital."
Lowenthal: "This is exactly what I meant. This was our theory."

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ON BENJAMIN AND BRECHT

by Wolfgang Freese

> *Brecht*: "Depth is a special dimension — depth in which absolutely nothing comes to light."
>
> *Benjamin*: "In closing, I told Brecht that to penetrate depth is my way of going to the antipodes." [1]

These two quotations are revealing. They come from Benjamin's studies of Kafka and related discussions with Brecht in Denmark. For Brecht, these questions must be understood in terms of the anti-fascist strategy. As with Kafka — whom Brecht, to Benjamin's surprise, just three years earlier had praised as a "prophetic writer" — he came to criticize Benjamin's phenomenal side, which constantly emphasized "the question of essence." Here Brecht became very "inflammatory," speaking of obscurantism and nonsense, and polemicizing against Dostoevsky, whom Benjamin was studying.[3] Thus, initially, Brecht comes across as a crude proponent of the Enlightenment, and Benjamin as the advocate of the depth in the romantic and mythical tradition.[4]

On closer examination, however, the difference between the two quotations becomes problematic. Brecht seems to claim that depth is only a meaningless, obscure concept, thus sounding rhetorical and neo-positivist. For Benjamin, on the other hand, while depth is his field of operation, he also seeks in it that which goes directly against his nature. This contradictoriness is difficult to analyze. Benjamin seems unable to defend micrological concern for the detail as such. Thus the Frankfurt School's distinguishing features — its sharp portrayal of detail, its defense of the

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1. Walter Benjamin, *Versuche über Brecht*, ed. with an Afterword by Rolf Tiedemann (Frankfurt, 1966), p. 122. On the general topic, cf. Herbert Claas, *Die politische Aesthetik Bertolt Brechts vom Baal zum Caesar* (Frankfurt, 1977). Ferruccio Masini, *Brecht e Benjamin. Scienza della letterature e ermeneutica materialista* (Bari, 1977), uses the two names patronymically for a collection of essays written during the 1960s and 1970s. Both the introduction (pp. 11-34, "Vocabulario estetico e vocabulario dialettico") and the most recent contribution, 1974 (pp. 161-180, "Realismo dialettico"), however, discuss in greater detail the theme of this article: the relation of marxism and of the materialist dialectics to avant-gard aesthetic theory as well as Korsch's philosophical significance and the context of the 1930s discussion about realism.

2. Benjamin, *Gesammelte Schriften*, ed. Helle Tiedemann-Bartels (Frankfurt, 1972), Vol. II, 3, p. 1204.

3. Werner Fuld, *Walter Benjamin. Zwischen den Stühlen. Eine Biographie* (Munich and Vienna, 1979), pp. 242f.

4. Under the influence of American pragmatism and of later neo-positivist developments, post-World War II German thought has emphasized that concern with depth is a dangerous feature of German history. In other words, Brecht was the man of the hour while Benjamin, as always, belonged to the past. Then came the "dialectic of the enlightenment," which paved the way for Benjamin's relevance. Concern with depth became not simply dangerous, but dangerously repressed, and the young generation was attracted to the psychoanalytically oriented cultural criticism of the Frankfurt School. Within this intellectual framework, Benjamin became central. These two phases of post-war development represent an underlying Brecht-Benjamin antagonism.

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particular against the claims of the totality, its faith in the dialectical method[5] — appear as mere appeasement toward Brecht. Benjamin calls himself an agent of enlightenment: its fifth column in the enemy camp. He is preoccupied with the mystical aspect of detail, the irrationality of the moment, the aura of the individual object. He wants to bring the enemy's nature to light. Implicitly he agrees with Brecht, but their tactics differ.

On this issue, people such as Scholem have sensed a betrayal in Benjamin's stance. For them, Benjamin was weak. According to a different interpretation, Benjamin was acting pragmatically and tactically toward Brecht. This was Adorno's opinion: Benjamin did not want to show his cards. The two positions may correspond to a personal relation. Various people, including eyewitnesses, have claimed that Benjamin was afraid of Brecht. This seemingly uninteresting personal dimension implies the bad consciousness of reformist-Marxism toward orthodox pragmatists closer to the party.

Going under (*zugrund gehen*) as an attitude is as much a part of Benjamin's concept of depth as immersion and letting-oneself-sink. In his book *On the Origin of German Trauerspiel*, Benjamin justifies his subjectivism: it has to do with origin (*Ursprung*), which, as a category of all phenomenal being, must not be confused with its emergence (*Entstehung*). "Origin stands in the flow of becoming like a *whirlpool* [emphasis added] and pulls the emerging material in rhythm. Origin can never be recognized in the naked, obvious stock of the factual, and its rhythm is open only to a dual insight. On the one hand, it wants to be recognized as restoration and re-establishment while on the other as something imperfect and inconsummate."[6]

Benjamin's friends and editors focus on this eminently Benjaminian concept in order to "save" him. Benjamin is supposed to be saved *from* Marxism and *for* theological and possibly mystical conceptions, but primarily *from* Brecht (by Scholem — Benjamin's closest friend for many years); *from* vulgar Marxist and vulgar materialist influences and *for* a more sublime, negative, though still Marxist, dialectics, but again primarily *from* Brecht (by Adorno, his friend, collaborator, and occasional censor). Tensions and deviations from his ascribed interests and tendencies result from whether Benjamin's works are viewed from Jerusalem or Frankfurt. The fact that Brecht is assigned the role of villain in this drama more often than Benjamin's contact with him would justify can be explained by the unflattering opinions Scholem and Adorno had of him. But the net effect for the Benjamin-Brecht relation has been not so much indignation toward Benjamin's closest friends but the consideration of Brecht's influence as a dominant component in Benjamin's thought.

5. See John Fekete, "Benjamin's Ambivalence," *Telos*, 35 (Spring 1978), pp. 193-198. Benjamin's use of the aphorism in this context, as opposed to "unregenerated macrological junk derived (via Brecht) from traditional Marxism" is an equally traditional form of bourgeois cultural criticism (via Nietzsche), as can be seen from the late Musil's writings.

6. Walter Benjamin, *Schriften*, Vol. I (Frankfurt am Main, 1955), pp. 161ff. Szondi has pointed out that the concept of depth, with its link with mysticism and the personal danger it entails for those becoming immersed in the past (e.g., Benjamin, the *flaneur*, who in the 1930s plunged into the historical depths of Paris) is a heritage of German idealism. He says: "When Hegel in his aesthetics speaks of the 'blind scholarship' which passes by 'even the clearly expressed and depicted depth without grasping it,' it can be asked whether depth *must* not always be missed, if it is abstracted from one's own experience in a falsely understood scientificity." But if the motto is detached from its former historical context, Nazi Germany in the 1930s, then one realizes the contradictions of the recent Benjamin-reception. Cf. Peter Szondi, "Hoffnung im Vergangenen. Ueber Walter Benjamin," in Peter Szondi, *Satz und Gegensatz. Sechs Essays* (Frankfurt, 1964), p. 93.

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As Habermas claims,[7] Benjamin allegedly accepted Brecht as "a sort of reality principle. . . leading him to abandon his esoteric style and thinking." Or the relation of the two men is considered the paradigm of the primacy of practice over theory. According to Meyer, Benjamin tries "to attach his theory to the practitioner's work, his language to Brecht's great simplicity of language,"[8] which Brecht himself called "crude" in comparison to Benjamin. Brenner, Lethen and Scharang see Benjamin's late work as decisively influenced by Brecht,[9] especially his view of art as an instrument of class struggle, and they base this view on Benjamin's "The Author as Producer" (1934) as well as on other essays, addresses, commentaries published in *Versuche über Brecht.*

The implications of their relation from the standpoint of a sociology of art have been elaborated by Bürger,[10] who also discusses the most important figure in these debates: Adorno. Brecht understood *The Three Penny Opera* (1930) as a "sociological experiment" (1931).[11] He was concerned with the contraposition of the "idea of art as an inviolable phenomenon nurtured directly from the human"[12] with capital's exploitative interests. He used the court to prove that the idea of artistic autonomy is practically meaningless. Brecht was not interested in autonomy as such, but only in its practical social implementation. The autonomy of art — in this case Brecht's contractually stipulated right to collaborate on the screenplay for the *Three Penny* film — cannot win against the capital-intensive film industry. Brecht drastically and one-sidedly suppressed the contradictory unity of truth and untruth in the thesis concerning artistic autonomy, to assert his view of art as a commodity *vis-à-vis* the bourgeois institutionalization of autonomy. He saw the commodification of art as a step forward because it destroyed the idea of the autonomous work of art. The new art should therefore no longer be a "luxury" but a "pedagogical discipline."[13]

Both Adorno and Benjamin have used Brecht's relfections on this process of institutionalization in their work on the sociology of art. In the long run, this may turn out to be more important than the lengthy discussion concerning the commodification of art. But they investigated differences in the individual media which were theoretically of no concern to Brecht, and — especially Adorno — the different degree of commodification in the structure of individual works, which Brecht consciously did not want to go into.[14] In this context Brecht developed the thesis of a paradigmatic change in the idea of art, which Benjamin then developed in his famous essay on the work of art. "These [film] cameras," Brecht says, "can, like nothing else, be used to

7. Jürgen Habermas, "Bewusstmachende oder rettende Kritik — die Aktualität Walter Benjamins" in *Zur Aktualität Walter Benjamins*, on the occasion of Benjamin's 80th birthday, ed. Siegfried Unseld (Frankfurt, 1972), p. 175.

8. Peter Mayer, "Die Wahrheit ist konkret. Notizen zu Benjamin und Brecht," in *Text und Kritik*, Sonderband Bertold Brecht, Vol. I, 2nd ed. (1978), p. 13.

9. Cf. Hildegard Brenner, "Die Lesbarkeit der Bilder. Skizzen zum Passagenentwurf," *Alternative H.*, 59-60 (1968), pp. 48ff; Helmut Lethen, "Zur materialistischen Kunsttheorie Benjamins," *Alternative H.*, 56-57 (1967), pp. 225ff; Hans Heinz Holz, *Vom Kunstwerk zur Ware* (Neuwied, 1972), Michael Scharang, *Zur Emanzipation der Kunst* (Neuwied, 1971).

10. Peter Bürger, "Kunstsoziologischen Aspekte der Brecht-Benjamin-Adorno Debatte der 30er Jahre," in *Seminar: Literatur- und Kunstsoziologie*, ed. Peter Bürger (Frankfurt am Main, 1978), pp. 11-20.

11. Bertolt Brecht, *Gesammelte Werke in 20 Bänden*, ed. Suhrkamp Verlag in collaboration with Elisabeth Hauptmann (Frankfurt, 1967), Vol. 18, pp. 139ff.

12. *Ibid.*, p. 199.

13. *Ibid.*, p. 158.

14. "No attempt shall be made to draw the familiar fine distinction between true and false art." Brecht, *Gesammelte Werke,* Vol. 11, *op.cit.*, p. 160.

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overcome the old untechnical, anti-technical 'radiant art' connected with religion."[15] Along with the thesis concerning the commodification of art, this is not quite as marginal as Bürger believes.[16] In Benjamin it becomes central and is expanded to the masses' needs which, in the 1960s, led to a popular upgrading of that entertainment art Adorno so vehemently opposed. The aim in Brecht was primarily to contribute to the materialist discussion of the sociology of art, while Benjamin's emphasis on the effect of art leads to more recent reception theory — and both were subsequently rejected by structuralist semiotics. As is well known, Adorno applied these ideas to the sociology of music in his essay "On Fetishism in Music and the Regression of Listening."

In his theory of the political economy of signs,[17] Baudrillard tries to discover a latent idealist anthropology in Marx. The Marxian and Brechtian idea of the direct consumption of commodities as "objects" (in the context of use-value and the satisfaction of needs) is, according to Baudrillard, the primitive conception of an anthropological objectivism. His analysis of fetishism as a reduction of symbolic equivalents corresponds to Benjamin's subjective reservations towards Brecht's "crude" object-centered view of art as a satisfaction of needs that can be analyzed adequately in terms of its commodity character and use value.[18] Whether it was a matter of consumer goods or of literary texts, Benjamin's relation to the object was thus fundamentally different from Brecht's constant insistence on its use value. Benjamin's phenomenological interest, moreover, isolated objects — such as quotations — in order to analyze their core. This analysis then disclosed "the nature of the object."

Thus, as Fuld points out, what he tended to end up with was "always a theory of knowledge, which can never be reduced to mere utility."[19] In Benjamin's concept of the aura — more precisely, in its adoption and reinterpretation by Adorno — we have (analogous to Baudrillard's concern for the independence of the symbolic equivalent), a surplus of experience which cannot be measured by psychological and practical ends. That this applied to much more than just works of art was clear where Brecht tended to respond aggressively as, e.g., in the Baudelaire discussion. For there, too, as Harth shows, Benjamin no longer denied "a peculiar aura even to the commodity." It had been Baudelaire's intention to bring this out. But, as Benjamin writes in "Central Park," "the commodity resists, it tries to look itself in the face. It celebrates its embodiment in the whore."[20]

Other aspects also come into play: an individual's integrity, the meaning of his lifework, his reputation and intellectual independence, and his writings. Thus, the reaction to Benjamin's adoption of supposedly alien theories was reduced to a concern with his dependence on Brecht. Obviously, this was no longer primarily a matter of Brecht and Benjamin but of positions cryptically designated by their names. Eurocommunism is discovering Benjamin as a "strategist in the literary struggle" —

15. *Ibid.*, Vol. 18, p. 158. And: "the technification of literary production can no longer be undone." *Ibid.*, p. 156.

16. Cf. Bürger, *op.cit.*, pp. 13ff. Brecht dealt with cinema from 1922 on, and discussed the public's so-called taste, especially in connection with the *Three Penny Trial*. He asked therefore for an investigation of "the expression of social interests, which the public wishes to satisfy in the movies" (*op.cit.*, Vol. 18, p. 166).

17. Jean Baudrillard, *Critique of the Political Economy of the Sign* (St. Louis, 1980).

18. On Baudrillard, cf. Robert D'Amico's excellent analysis, "Desire and the Commodity Form," in *Telos*, 35 (Spring 1978), pp. 88-122.

19. Benjamin Fuld, *Zwischen den Stühlen, op.cit.*, p. 153.

20. Dietrich Harth, Martin Grzimek, "*Aura* und *Aktualität* als ästhetische Begriffe," in Gebhardt *et al.*, *Walter Benjamin: Zeitgenosse der Moderne* (Kronberg, 1976), pp. 125ff.

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which is how he saw himself (first thesis on "The Critic's Technique" in *One-Way Street*). This constitutes his "relevance today." The question of his independence *vis-à-vis* Brecht seems to be connected with this self-conception. Witte, for instance, has pointed this out with regard to the changed function of the arts. Benjamin had a theoretical understanding of these historical problems as did Brecht, but "a much more self-conscious one." According to Witte, "Nothing would be more absurd than to attempt to reinterpret this agreement between a critic and a dramatist — which was reached from totally different points of departure — in terms of a biographically conditioned dependence." Since Witte sees Brecht and Benjamin only in terms of one's theatrical work and the other's theory (which sought "to understand the new period of art in its entire social and cultural context"),[21] he considers the question of priority inconsequential, while at the same time suggesting that it could also be a matter of Benjamin's influence on Brecht — for instance, in connection with the planned journal *Kritische Blätter*. In this discussion, their agreement extends to the "object, range, of goals, and readership of the new criticism," but not to the question of the truth content of criticism. On this subject, as in the autonomy debate, Brecht remained pragmatic (truth is "what can be realized in society"),[22] while Benjamin retained the older criteria of his negative theology and, as Witte emphasizes, defended them against Brecht. That an expression such as "critical time" is meant by Brecht in a historical materialist vein, while Benjamin can "without hesitation interpret it eschatologically," is blatant evidence of the explosiveness and ambiguous nature of their conversations.

Despite such fundamental differences, it must be asked whether Brecht's relation to Benjamin can still be divided neatly into one of agreement, in a relatively superficial sociological sense, and one of epistemological differences of principle. Thus (as the sole example of a commentary published in Benjamin's lifetime) his interpretation of the Fatzer-poem from the first volume of Brecht's *Versuche,* with its allegoric methods and obscure associations, is a perfect example of Benjamin's technique.[23] Witte simply points out that this allegoric method "is Benjamin's own from the first," and that Benjamin himself in 1939 called it an "authoritarian form."[24] But in connection with Benjamin's exaggerated ideas of the possibility of literature influencing a public that, in Brecht's view, still had to be educated, Witte says that Benjamin "succumbed to the fascination which Brecht's essays had on him," i.e., the idea of changing society from the top down. Here, Benjamin's "voluntaristic over-estimation of the critical position" let it sink to the level of propaganda,[25] thus confirming the fears of his Frankfurt and Jerusalem friends concerning Brecht's unwholesome influence.

21. Bernd Witte, *Walter Benjamin: Der Intellektuelle als Kritiker. Untersuchungen zu seinem Frühwerk* (Stuttgart, 1976), p. 170. A variant of this view is the thesis of collective knowledge, based on a few statements by Brecht and Benjamin. For instance, Werner Mittenzwei ("Brecht und die Schicksale der Materialästhetik" in *Argument*, Special Issue 11 on Brecht-Tui Kritik, 1976, pp. 175-212) writes: "It has already been pointed out by various scholars that Benjamin's ideas on cinema are unthinkable without Brecht's study on the *Three Penny Trial.* This does not mean, however, that all essential thoughts came from Brecht. He was perhaps only the formulator of collective insights" (p. 195). This, of course, also applies to Benjamin. Mittenzwei is concerned with demonstrating the influence of Brecht and especially Tratjakov, i.e., artists closer to the proletariat and the party (also Piscator and Eisler, and earlier Heartfield), on Benjamin.

22. *Ibid.*, p. 171.

23. *Ibid.*, p. 229, footnote 161. Witte here presents a few notes from the Bertolt Brecht Archives.

24. *Ibid.*, p. 175.

25. *Ibid.*, p. 176.

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Yet Brecht remained more skeptical about the question of the leading role of criticism and therefore restricted the function of his didactic plays entirely to the actor's learning process. A further contradiction consists in the fact that Benjamin's theoretical position of those years presupposed the masses' direct revolutionary mentality and the intellectual's secondary role. Thus, in Benjamin, literature and the theater were secondary, while Brecht based his theater on pedagogical intentions directly related to the contemporary historical situation. Here theory and practice are equated with the idea of an idealist utopia and skeptical *Realpolitik* in such a way that idealism postulates confidence in sound human reason independently of historical facts.

Pfotenhauer has analyzed Brecht's relation to Benjamin in this perspective.[26] He does not merely report on Benjamin's evaluation of Brecht,[27] but sees him as an erratic commentator. First, he presents the familiar 1930 constellation: Brecht as a perfector of Baudelaire (from "dream" to "awakening," according to Benjamin), Brecht as a paragon of esoteric art (which Benjamin advocated in theory), Brecht's epic theater and gestural approach as a means of depicting a world to be transformed. At the same time, Pfotenhauer sees indications of a falsification of Brecht's intentions in Benjamin's "strategies of interpretation," which are supposed to contribute to the realization of as yet non-existent social conditions. That which, according to Brecht in his didactic plays, still had to be learned by training is for Benjamin already known to "healthy human reason"[28](though in the essay "The Author as Producer" Benjamin confronts this viewpoint with the materialist dialectic). Pfotenhauer accuses Benjamin of *petitio principii* whenever Benjamin presupposes changed historical conditions for bringing about possibilities that could only be the result of those same conditions. That applies especially to the question of the relation between literary producers and revolutionary proletarian masses. Here, too, then, "questionable interpretations" appear as a fundamental trait of Benjamin's relation to Brecht.[29]

As is well known, Benjamin wanted to use commentaries as an "authoritarian form" to confront an object "with recognized authority," i.e., the text.[30] Thus, over-interpretation turns out to be a strategy based on Benjamin's own conception of history. It is an anticipatory protest against the expected incorrect reception of Brecht's work. This practice is similar to techniques of interpretation of the Bible and of the Talmud, such as the haggadic midrash with its allegoric explanations and digressions. However, Benjamin's employment of this technique is so highly reflective that he can be considered a precursor of the most recent theories of literary reception. This points to a convergence between Marxism and theology.[31] Theological motifs of Benjamin's conception of language could likewise be interpreted in terms of his conception of the text.

Efforts to find positive features in Benjamin here conflict with philologically grounded criticisms of what is seen as subtle microanalysis in the sense of Benjamin's

26. Helmut Pfotenhauer, *Aesthetische Erfahrung und gesellschaftliches System. Untersuchungen zu Methodenproblemen einer materialistischen Literaturanalyse am Spätwerk Walter Benjamins* (Stuttgart, 1975).

27. As does, e.g., Michael Rumpf, "Walter Benjamin's Nachleben," *D Vjs*, 52 (1978), pp. 147ff.

28. Pfotenhauer, *op.cit.*, pp. 147ff.

29. *Ibid.*, p. 108.

30. Walter Benjamin, *Versuche über Brecht, op.cit.*, p. 49. See also Pfotenhauer, *op.cit.*, pp. 112ff.

31. Cf. Günther Henning, *Walter Benjamin und der humane Marxismus. Zwischen Marxismus und Theologie* (Olten and Freiburg, 1974).

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technique of interpretation, or at least a political program, can also appear as entirely esoteric. This fosters the suspicion that Benjamin may have been over-estimated. Some academic criticisms list a whole series of deficiencies that allegedly make Benjamin totally unfit as a critic. Accordingly, Benjamin did not meet any academic success for valid reasons: his methodological sloppiness, the intertwining of personal problems with literary and historical ones, his preferred technique of arbitrary montage, his linguistic obscuring of textually immanent structures, thesis-mongering instead of explication, and his tendency toward associative thinking. These pitfalls are seen, for instance, in his studies on the baroque, Hölderlin, and Baudelaire.[32] Such a reaction was to be expected. As in other cases, criticism does not focus on a particular work as much as against a laudatory reception which hastily creates a model image:[33] against an uncritical reverence that ultimately amounts to a misuse of the authority of the revered author by undermining that authority.[34] Some of these reservations also apply to Brecht's relation to Benjamin. If there is any truth to the report that Benjamin was "afraid" of Brecht, one reason may be Benjamin's fear that Brecht, the sober and pragmatic author of poems and plays, could some day forget his fundamentally interested and friendly attitude, his admiration for Benjamin's deep knowledge in historical matters, and look more critically into the metaphysical and theological components of his thinking. Brecht's notes confirm this assumption. Yet, the claim that Benjamin's speculations on these matters were knowingly used as a smokescreen[35] will not suffice as an explanation for the whole duration of his friendship with Brecht.

To assume even tentatively the standpoint of academic criticism — which, although sharply phrased, is to a great extent philologically justified — does not mean that Benjamin loses his historical significance. The Benjamin renaissance cannot simply be written off as an error. It would be impossible to assume a dry, value-free standpoint, as if everything depended on philological accuracy and sound reasoning. Benjamin's influence is probably based less on his literary-historical analyses than on his many attempts "to salvage the right moment."[36] Benjamin's literary influence is thus not based on the proud claim that he was the leading critic of German literature. This does not mean that philological reservations can be defused by pointing to the historical function of leftist intellectuals during the Weimar republic[37] — prophetic

32. This type of criticism has been advanced most forcefully by Michael Rumpf, "Walter Benjamin's Nachleben," *D Vjs*, 52 (1978), pp. 137-166. Knopf has identified a general "attitude benefitting from historical hindsight in evaluating poor Brecht" and this includes Benjamin as well: "Their analyses of Brecht's much reknowned poems show how bourgeois literary science has interpreted away these poems, because of its lack of any solid ground under its feet; this is true even of Benjamin's 'commentaries.' " Cf. Jan Knopf, *Bertolt Brecht. Ein kritischer Forschungsbericht. Fragwürdiges in der Brecht-Forschung* (Frankfurt, 1974), p. 128.

33. *Ibid.*, p. 137.

34. *Ibid.*, p. 166.

35. Helmut Salzinger, *Swinging Benjamin* (Frankfurt, 1973), p. 56.

36. Robert Musil, *Gesammelte Werke in neun Bänden*, ed. Adolf Frisé, Vol. 5 (*Der Mann ohne Eigenschaften*) (Reinbek bei Hamburg, 1978), p. 1888. The full passage is as follows: "Idealism is coming to an end. Ulrich could care less. But the right moment would have to be salvaged." Ernst Bloch's theory of non-simultaneity also runs in that direction. He held that "the examination of the possible remainder of the bankrupted estate" was the essential task along with the unmasking of ideological appearance in classical humanism. Cf. Ernst Bloch, *Erbschaft dieser Zeit* (Zurich, 1935), pp. 13-15. This position is strongly condemned in East Germany: "Such a reduction of the heritage to the insolvent estate of the bankrupt bourgeoisie was essentially a variant of late-bourgeois modernistic ideas of the break in tradition." Cf. Dieter Schiller, "*...von Grund auf anders." Programmatik der Literatur in antifaschistischen Kampf während der dreissiger Jahre* (Berlin, 1974), p. 225.

37. Cf. among others, Istvan Ceak, *Weimar Germany's Left-wing Intellectuals* (Berkeley,

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charisma is no substitute for accuracy. Yet, the "purity and peculiar beauty" of Benjamin's work is very closely connected with the complex historical conditions within which it originated.[38] In Habermas' masterful and disquieting formulation: "Benjamin's intellectual existence has such a strong surrealistic streak that it ought not to be subjected to the requirements of consistency."[39] In his commentary on "Benjamin's Ambivalence," Fekete critically dissects a cultural critical, an aesthetic, and a historico-philosophical Benjamin: "It is fairly well established that there are several Walter Benjamins and it follows that his work embodies ambivalence and tension rather than coherence and identity."[40] Only the political Benjamin is here perceived as being associated with Brecht. The "apocalyptic" and the "libertarian" one remain unaware of this association.

Like Witte, Arendt also writes: "The Benjamin-Brecht friendship is unique, because it brought together the greatest living German author and the most important critic of the time. (It is to both men's credit that they knew this.)" But she found the essential element to consist in both men's sense for the concrete and practical. According to her, it must have been crucial for Benjamin "to have found in Brecht, on the Left, a man who, despite all talk, was as 'undialectical' in his thinking as himself, but whose intelligence was quite unusually realistic so that every 'idea' immediately took the most concrete and precise form"[41] — exactly what Adorno so disliked. Without ever having explicitly stated it, Adorno probably saw at work here the "failed objectivity" of an ontological need, which, as in Heidegger, wants to philosophize by using things as the exclusive point of departure. Arendt's observations surely contradict Brecht's strivings of those years — in fact, much in the evaluation of Benjamin depends on his proximity to Brecht — and yet, in its distance from Adorno, it contains the right solution. In August 1940, Brecht recommended that he be regarded not so much a proletarian author as a bourgeois writer — as were, for instance, Hasek and Silone. "The surest route is to classify and use us as dialecticians among a whole series of bourgeois politicians who have made the proletariat cause their own."[42] This is also the editorial outlook of the journal *Krise und Kritik*, which Brecht and Benjamin planned in 1930 but failed in the planning stages. Although both Brecht and Benjamin ridiculed leftist intellectuals as "Tuis" at the time of the Paris Congress of 1935, they were hardly willing to abandon the dialectic to the Frankfurt School — the "great method," as Brecht called it in the *Me Ti* novel. Conversely, the members of the school reproached them with having understood little of that method.

As for the close relation of theory of art, Marxism, and literary practice, Brüggemann discusses the attitude of literature toward history.[43] Either it is the reflection of a history that unfolds in absolute rationality as the idea turns into form, or it is a multifold practice of a free-moving though socially responsible artist. Lukacs and — in a different way — Bloch fall into the first category; Brecht and Benjamin the second. Hegel also operates within this second category, but only indirectly. This

1968). Walter Laqueur, *Weimar. A Cultural History 1919-1933* (New York, 1976), pp. 41-77; cf. also Peter Demetz's Introduction to Walter Benjamin, *Reflections* (New York, 1978), p. xi f. On the general topic see Karl Markus Michel, "Die sprachlose Intelligenz," *Kursbuch 1* (June 1965), pp. 73-119; 4 (February 1966), pp. 161-212; and 9 (June 1967), pp. 200-227.

38. Witte, *op.cit.*, p. 185.
39. Habermas, *op.cit.*, p. 176.
40. Fekete, *op.cit.*, p. 192.
41. Hannah Arendt, *Benjamin, Brecht. Zwei Essays* (Munich, 1971), p. 21.
42. Cf. *Brecht-Chronik*, ed. Klaus Völker (Munich, 1971), p. 83.
43. Cf. Heinz Brüggemann, *Literarische Technik und soziale Revolution* (Reinbek, 1973), pp. 14ff.

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discussion immediately shifts to basic principles, but at the same time it also evokes the historical positions at the end of the 1920s and the early 1930s concerning the Popular Front and the Third International, as well as the writings during the exile period. In Brecht — Brüggemann has some reservations about Benjamin — the Marxian concepts of "production" and "practice" become the determining factor. Together, Benjamin and Brecht (Benjamin in his commentaries on Brecht's writings) formulate the author's revolutionary activity as consisting in freeing the reader or viewer from the pseudo-concrete relations of capitalist society (Kosik's terms) and setting in motion his own productive force. Theoretically, Brecht stood closer to Tretjakov, but how does his work reflect this? In Benjamin's case, this problem does not arise.

In this connection, it is important to discuss the overdue question with which only Radnoti has dealt at any length: why did Benjamin abstain so completely from politics in the 1920s?[44] Radnoti cites mainly personal and biographical reasons,[45] suggesting that Benjamin drew closer to Marxism only when his own cause was at stake. In many ways, efforts to create a proletarian culture and public in the 1920s outshine the theoretical efforts of the 1930s. The natural objection that it was no longer possible to organize a proletarian cultural sphere in the 1930s does not explain Benjamin's earlier passivity. Along with the SPD's plans to transmit existing cultural and educational values to the workers, there were since 1925 or earlier a growing number of leftist cultural and political organizations.[46] At the end of the 1920s, Piscator's, Eisler's, Heartfield's and Brecht's efforts led to the popularization of revolutionary Russian films and to the agitprop theatrical work in which Brecht participated as a writer with Friedrich Wolf.

In this context, the most interesting figure was perhaps Willi Münzenberg. His *Internationale Arbeiterhilfe* was established in 1921, and his modernization of techniques of agitation and propaganda went beyond the narrow horizons of the Third International. Münzenberg "measured the possibilities of political-journalistic work by current technical and economic conditions."[47] According to his conception of an anti-nationalistic counter-public sphere, the strongest resistance to fascism, including political resistance, would have been possible through cultural policy.[48]

44. Sandor Radnoti, "Benjamin's Poetics," *Telos*, 37 (Fall 1978), pp. 63-81. In his critical biography of Benjamin, *Zwischen den Stühlen, op.cit.*, p. 50. Fuld has interpreted Benjamin's "uncritical" collection of quotations and references with political indifference in a different way: "Walter Benjamin was a collector not only of unusual books but also of unusual statements" (p. 152). Arendt uncritically points out the same phenomenon in her introduction to Benjamin's *Illuminations* (London, 1970), pp. 46ff., as an isolated cultural-historical fact. Stanley Mitchell has compared Benjamin's strong interest in Baroque in his "Introduction" (1973) to Walter Benjamin, *Understanding Brecht* (London, 1977), to T.S. Eliot's rediscovery of the metaphysical poets: "He began, very typically for the time, as an aesthetic philosopher who lamented the passing of old traditions, as modern technology and mass society took their place. He was anything but a revolutionary avant-garde thinker. He was always avant-garde, but in the spirit of Eliot . . . and as a critic he matched the associative, allegorical powers of Eliot's poetry" (p. xvi).

45. Radnoti mentions Heinle's suicide, his disappointment in Wyneken, his Jewishness, together with a frightening quotation of Benjamin's: "In the most horrible of moments of a people's history, only those who belong to it have the right to speak . . ., those in a position to say not only *mea res agitur*, but also *propriam rem ago*. The Jew certainly cannot speak." Letter to F. Chr. Rang, Nov. 18, 1923, *Briefe, op.cit.*, Vol. I, p. 310.

46. In the 1920-24 period, there were the Workers Educational Institute of Leipzig, the Workers Theater Association with 600,000 members, the Workers Singers Association with some 370,000 members, the Workers Radio Club, etc. Cf. Jost Hermand and Frank Trommler, *Die Kultur der Weimarer Republik* (Munich, 1978), p. 124.

47. *Ibid.*, p. 127.

48. Cf. also John Willett, *Art and Politics in the Weimar Republic. The New Sobriety*

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Wittfogel had called for one-act plays, revolutionary cabaret, and satirical puppet shows rather than mass performances. Benjamin, along with Asja Lacis, first responded with a program for a proletarian children's theater (1928). The fundamental problem in Benjamin's adoption of the materialist conception of base and superstructure[49] reflects his hesitant transition to Marxism at a time when it seems almost to have been politically too late.

Though Benjamin and Brecht began to work together, they parted ways in their relation to tradition. What is crucial here is not so much their theoretical relation to tradition, e.g., Benjamin's distinction between the auratic and non-auratic art,[50] but their actual adherence to tradition in terms of their upbringing and education, their teachers and sources, as well as their writings. Brüggemann refers only to "literary tradition." The influences at work in Benjamin, however, cannot be so limited. Childhood, youth, and past in a broader sense must also be considered. Since the question of a "change" circa 1925-26 from an early aestheticism to a late Marxist Benjamin cannot be regarded as definitive, the comparison with Brecht may also shed light on this issue. In Brecht there is an anarchist phase, a pre-Marxist youthful phase of protest and self-discovery which in retrospect appears as a heuristic phase. In Benjamin the "turn" can be seen from a radical break between the esoteric aestheticism, messianic religiosity, and metaphysics of the early works, to the Marxist critique of society, art and literature in the late writings.

Brecht and Benjamin shared the destiny of their generation. They grew up before 1917, in good middle-class families, and their education focused on classical literature and history. They experienced the outbreak of World War I amid nationalistic exaltation, but they became increasingly politicized toward the end of the war and they turned to Marxism during the post-war years of collapse, inflation, and the impending new disaster. In both cases the year 1925-26 marks a change whose immediate cause (at least in Brecht's case), was the struggle over the Ruhr.

But the differences are also important. Born in 1892, Benjamin still belonged to the Expressionist generation. Not so with Brecht, who was born in 1898. This fact is of little importance insofar as neither author participated in Expressionism, although Benjamin did have contact with it.[51] This is still before Brecht's first steps beyond Augsburg. In addition, there is a fundamentally different personal development. In the remembrances of Münsterer and other early friends, we have the youthful image of an anarchist, precocious Brecht independently creative at a very early age. Benjamin's biography, on the other hand, runs a rather conventional course. His philosophical mentors were Plato, Kant and the neo-Kantians. In the private recitations of his circle of friends he prefers unknowns, baroque gems, forgotten authors like Gockingk or his friend Heinle, along with Baudelaire, the symbolists, and selected Expressionists. He liked Heym, rejected Trakl, just as later, against the opinion of Mehring, whom he admired, he considered Lessing to be a non-critic. According to Werner Kraft, "Everything far-off, everything primitive attracted him irresistibly, it led into the inner soul."[52] Among the presents he gave them were first editions, private prints, children's

1917-1933 (New York, 1979).

49. Cf. Radnoti, *op.cit.*, p. 66.

50. On Benjamin's concept of aura, cf. among others Habermas, *op.cit.*; Michael Scharang, *op.cit.*, pp. 7-25; Lienhard Wawtzyn, *Walter Benjamins Kunsttheorie: Kritik einer Rezeption* (Neuwied, 1973), pp. 25-39; Rumpf, *op.cit.*, p. 141.

51. For example, he associated with Kurt Hiller and Gustav Wyneken, who was one of the organizers of early expressionism, founded the "Free School Community," and collaborated on Hiller's *Ziel*-Yearbooks.

52. Werner Kraft, "Ueber Walter Benjamin," *Zur Aktualität Walter Benjamin*, *op.cit.*, p. 68.

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books, gold-leaf editions, allegories and fairy tales. He loved Bachofen, Scheerbart, and "the fairies." To women he liked to recommend Plato's *Symposium*.

Despite an age difference of only six years and a common interest in puppet theater and French symbolists, there was a generation gap between Benjamin and Brecht. The Augsburg high school student, well versed in the Bible and in Latin, was considered an obstinate rebel who worried his nationalistic teachers. Instead of the complicated and sentimental style of the young Benjamin's letters, Brecht developed a style of feigned stupidity and improvised jokes. Besides Karl May he read detective stories, Van de Velde, and especially Wedekind; and to his girlfriends he did not recommend Plato, but sang original serenades. For example, on April 25, 1930, Benjamin told Scholem of his Brecht-commentary and of the plan "to smash Heidegger in a very close critical reading group conducted by Brecht and me in the summer." Then he read — "with horror," as he put it — "to the left, of Watson's 'behaviorism,' to the right, of Klages' *Spirit and Life*." [53] On March 7, 1931, he wrote to Max Rychner that he owed the critical turn against bourgeois literary science to his basic metaphysical orientation; he did not need "Marxist threads of thought for this," and he pointed to his *Trauerspiel* study, which had been rejected in 1925, in Frankfurt, as a dissertation. Further: "What I did not know at the time of its composition became clearer and clearer to me afterward: that there was a mediation, however tense and problematic, between my very particular way of seeing things and dialectical materialism. But there was no mediation with the saturation of bourgeois science." [54]

Marxist-Leninist critics such as Kagan and Ovsyannikov can see in this nothing but "inner strife" while theological friends, such as Scholem, speak of Benjamin's "self-betrayal" and the difference between his real and his "feigned" thought processes, as Scholem wrote in his March 30, 1931, letter, providing the strongest ammunition for Benjamin's critics. What Benjamin considered an attempted synthesis is here labeled a "state of tension." Since these tensions were not resolved but only suspended they "get along quite well together" [55] — i.e., Benjamin and materialism, though Brecht's name could be substituted for materialism. In his cautious answer, dated April 17, 1931, he referred to Brecht: "Moreover, it could broaden my basis, which is intrinsically narrow enough, if you had a look at the *total* extent of Brecht's essays. . . . Much of what has led me to stand more and more in solidarity with Brecht's literary production was discussed precisely in your letter; but this includes much which is still unknown to you." [56] To Scholem he cited Brecht, but to Rychner almost at the same time he appealed to the Talmudic tradition. He asked him "not to see [him] as a representative of dialectical materialism in a dogmatic sense, but as a scientist to whom the *position* of a materialist seems scientifically and humanly more productive in all matters of concern to us than the idealistic one." And yet he confesses: "I have never been able to research and think other than, if I may say so, in a theological sense — namely, in accordance with the Talmudic doctrine of the 49 levels of meaning in each passage of the Torah. Well, in my experience, the most shop-worn communist platitude has more *hierarchies of being* than present-day bourgeois profundity, which has always the function of the apology." [57]

53. Walter Benjamin, *Briefe*, ed. with notes by Gershom Scholem and Theodor W. Adorno, Vol. II (Frankfurt, 1966), p. 514.
54. *Ibid.*, pp. 523ff.
55. *Ibid.*, pp. 525-529.
56. *Ibid.*, pp. 529-532.
57. *Ibid.*, p. 524.

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What from Scholem's viewpoint looks like class betrayal fills him with the opposite scruples and, probably, fears: why can he not move his work space, his "little writing factory," out of comfortable West Berlin to the North or East, as would be, so he thought, morally required. And he readily concedes to Scholem that from a party standpoint his writings would probably have to be considered counter-revolutionary.[58] At the same time, since his visit to Moscow in December-January 1926-27, he was so strongly influenced by the Soviet model (his ensuing study of Russian authors, Russian cinema, and theater confirms this) that he could speak of his own path to dialectical materialism, which came about through his association with Asja Lacis since 1924, independently of Brecht.

Questions of principles became evident in his relation to Adorno concerning their different evaluations of modern techniques of reproduction in art, which says something about Benjamin's common ground with Brecht. Huyssen clearly formulates this state of affairs: "To put it simply, Adorno was looking at the U.S. of the 1940s, Benjamin at the Soviet Union of the 1920s. Another important fact is that, like Brecht, Benjamin saw great potential in the 'Americanism' introduced in Germany in the 1920s, while Adorno never overcame his deep mistrust of anything American."[59] In fact, taking Benjamin's loyalties as a whole, one could speak of his two elliptical focal points: Moscow and Paris. Since he remained in the West, he was able to develop his ideas of a materialist aesthetic without having to take into consideration changing political constellations, as was the case with Lukacs. Benjamin was free to reject the Comintern's criticism of Lukacs' *History and Class Consciousness,* defending it in a review published in *Literarische Welt,* and in the 1930s share Brecht's critique of the orthodox Lukacs.

Despite all these fluctuations, in the late 1920s-early 1930s, partly under Brecht's influence, Benjamin developed his ideas into a materialist aesthetic and critique of culture which subsequently offered new perspectives in 1968 when the anti-authoritarian phase of the student movement was coming to an end. This involved replacing Adorno's negative critique of culture with a positive one, i.e., one attempting to understand new methods, materials, and techniques connected with the commercialization of artistic production and distribution as necessary progress. The basis for this was the belief, shared by Brecht, that capitalism produced within itself the means to overcome it. Benjamin and the students of 1968 hoped that a closer *rapprochement* of intellectuals and artists with the working class and the eventual development of new media techniques and modes of depiction, or the readoption of dadaistic elements in pop art, would become the condition for a revolutionary transformation of society. The essays written during his collaboration with Brecht ("The Author as Producer" and "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction") thus became his most important texts. The theory of art fed into the theory of the crisis of capitalism. "The critique of this development in the reception of Benjamin increased strongly at the end of the 1970s. The growing exegesis of Benjamin's works and the methodical reference to him that can be noted everywhere [thus] must be understood less as a productive new beginning than as the sign of an increasing 'affirmation of his authority.' "[60]

58. *Ibid.*, p. 531.

59. Andreas Huyssen, "The Cultural Politics of Pop: Reception and Critique of U.S. Pop Art in the Federal Republic of Germany," *New German Critique,* 4 (Winter 1975), p. 92. Similar observations have also been made by Burckhardt Lindner, "Brecht-Benjamin-Adorno — Ueber Veränderungen der Kunstproduktion im wissenschaftlich-technischen Zeitalter," in *Text und Kritik,* Sonderband Brecht L (1972), pp. 14-36.

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Meanwhile, studies on Benjamin-Brecht reception tend to retract the overestimation of the revolutionary power of technological developments in artistic production — an overestimation transposed from the 1930s anti-fascist struggle and from the analysis of the early Soviet Union, which, at least in Benjamin, was frequently reminiscent of the Prolet-Cult of the 1920s. Instead there was a call for a new synthesis with Adorno's analysis of the culture industry. The realization of socially stabilizing functions of television and film, as well as the critique of pop art, caused the Benjamin euphoria of the late 1960s and early 1970s to subside.[61] But precisely when it seemed as if the baby was about to be thrown out with the bath (Benjamin with the student revolts), a critique of Benjamin in the context of socialism started to develop in East Germany.[62]

In his book on Benjamin, Witte was the last to document the details of the Brecht-Benjamin relation until 1933, after his earlier work had already laid the foundation.[63] In May 1927 Benjamin was introduced to Brecht by Asja Lacis — an event that Lacis herself reported in detail and to which Benjamin alluded in a June 6 letter to Scholem.[64] From then on they met regularly in Berlin, even more frequently in Paris, in the South of France, but most importantly during Brecht's Danish exile in Svendborg and Skovbostrand, where Benjamin visited him three times for longer periods of time.[65] In May 1939 Brecht left for Sweden and never saw Benjamin again. In August 1941, in Santa Monica, Calif., he was deeply stricken to hear of his friend's suicide at the Spanish border almost a year before. Brecht's references to this incident testify to the fundamental solidarity of their literary and critical output within the context of anti-fascism. But his theoretical position comes out even in grief, or rather, for this once, it is dressed in grief: "The enemy who chased you from your books does not let himself be wearied by the likes of us."[66] In biographical terms, the question of

60. S. Späth, B. Witte, "Sozialgeschichtliche Tendenzen in der Germanistik der siebziger Jahre," in *Mitteilungen des deutschen Germanistenverbandes*, 27:3 (September 1980), p. 16.

61. On the Benjamin debate itself, see the journals *Das Argument*, 46 (March 1968); *Alternative*, 56-57 (October-December 1967); *Alternative*, 59-60 (April-June 1968) contains a bibliography; *Merkur*, 21:3 (1967); *Merkur*, 22:1-2 (1968); *Kursbuch*, 20 (March 1970) shows the beginning of the discussion in the leading organ of the student movement at that time. After Hans Magnus Enzensberger, in issue 15 of November 1968 had, for the first time, used Benjamin in the *Kursbuch* as an authority ("Gemeinplatze, die neueste Literatur betreffend," pp. 187-197) commodity aesthetics, media theory, street theater, and methodological questions concerning literary criticism were assimilated to Benjamin's perspective. On the history of materialist aesthetics, especially as they concern the Brecht-Benjamin relationship, see Mittenzwei, *op.cit.*, Thomas Metscher, "Aesthetik als Abbildtheorie. Erkenntnistheoretische Grundlagen materialistischer Kunsttheorie und das Realismusproblem in den Literaturwissenschaften," in *Das Argument*, 77 (December 1972), pp. 919-976.

62. Mittenzwei, *op.cit.*, p. 190.

63. Bernd Witte, "Feststellungen zu Walter Benjamin und Kafka," in *Neue Rundschau*, 84 (1973), pp. 480-494. On Benjamin and Brecht's conversations about Kafka see also Pfotenhauer, *op.cit.*, pp. 163-166.

64. Asja Lacis, *Revolutionär im Briefe: Berichte über proletarisches Theater, über Meyerhold, Brecht, Benjamin und Piscator*, ed. by Hildegard Brenner (Munich, 1971). On this book and author, cf. Patty Lee Parmalee in *New German Critique*, 4 (Winter 1975), pp. 163-166.

65. The available documents on their relations in Denmark are collected in Rolf Tiedemann's *Essays on Brecht* (1966), in Benjamin's correspondence, Brecht's "Work-Journal," in mostly unpublished notes on conversations in the Brecht archives, in the Leipzig Reclam edition *Lesezeichen* and in various letters, memoires, reports of friends and contemporaries. Cf. *Lesezeichen, Schriften zur deutschprachigen Literatur*, ed. Gerhard Seidel (Leipzig, 1970), which contains the first printing of Benjamin's lecture "Bertolt Brecht."

66. Brecht, *Gesammelte Werke, op.cit.*, Vol. 10, p. 828. On common features and a

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the "authenticity" of Benjamin's dialectical materialism fades when compared with this political predicament. In the early 1930s, he had no alternative — as his letters demonstrate, especially the March 7, 1931, letter to Max Rycher cited above.

Other documentation in this context includes Scholem's letter of March 30, 1931, in which he speaks of Benjamin's "self-deception," and Benjamin's response of April 17. He confronts Scholem's "broad perspective" with his "reflexive overtones."[67] In addition to political necessities, he sets his mind on what the times demand, including a moment of personal self-abnegation, and concedes the possibility of his merely conditional value as an "individual." This motif is typical of Brecht and Benjamin. It indicates a heroism "in dark times." Among the few passages that reflect this viewpoint in the works of the most unsentimental of the emigré authors writing on this subject is the Svendborg poem "To Those Born Later": "I can do but little. But the rulers would sit more securely without me, I hope. So my time went by, which was given to me on earth."[68] One after another, Brecht's contacts with the outside world were cut off: first the newspapers, then the radio news. He registered the conquest of Europe on his maps, until finally only England remained. His poetic activity seemed increasingly absurd to him. On August 19, 1940, in Finland he noted: "When for a change of pace I open my *Messingkauf,* it seems to me as if a cloud of dust is blown into my face; how can one imagine that anything of the sort will ever have meaning again? That is no theoretical question. I ought to be able to imagine it. And it is not a matter of Hitler's momentary victories, but only of my isolation as far as literary production is concerned. When I listen to the radio news in the morning, while reading Boswell's *Life of Johnson* and peeping out into the birth landscape with fog from the river, the unnatural day begins with no dissonance, without any sound at all. That is the *intermediary time.*"[69] The stress here is on material circumstances that deprive Brecht the dramatist of the social conditions for production.

In Benjamin the same theme also points to his situation of inner distress. When Brecht occasionally despairs concerning his participation in the revolution via artistic means, there are overtones of resignation; but in Benjamin this is always related to salvation in a personal sense. Toward the end of the previously quoted letter to Scholem, he says: "For you could with some justification consider what I call clear the very height of ambiguity. Good, I reach an extreme. A shipwrecked man adrift on a raft, climbing to the top of the shattered mast. But he has a chance of giving a signal from there so that he will be saved."[70] In 1937 in "Edward Fuchs: Collector and Historian," Benjamin sees himself in the tradition of Franz Mehring, who had already come to the position "that art can expect its rebirth only from the economic and political victory of the proletariat." According to Benjamin, "The development of art has proved him right."[71] Benjamin says this despite his high esteem (in a 1934 Paris

historical evaluation of Benjamin's and Brecht's theory of fascism, see Wolfgang Emmerich, " 'Massenfaschismus' und die Rolle des Aesthetischen. Faschismustheorie bei Ernst Bloch, Walter Benjamin, Bertolt Brecht," in *Antifaschistische Literatur. Programme, Autoren, Werke,* ed. Lutz Winkler, Vol. I (Kronberg, 1977), pp. 258ff. Emmerich, who incidentally concedes to Bloch the earliest and sharpest insights into the nature of fascism, sees common features especially in the fact that Brecht "understood himself, together with other Marxist intellectuals of Benjamin's type, as members of a minority who saw themselves confronted with a majority of narrow-minded, orthodox, blindly progressive, cultural politicians and writers of the anti-fascist camp" (p. 259).

67. Benjamin, *Briefe, op.cit.,* Vol. 2, p. 530.
68. Brecht, *Gesammelte Werke, op.cit.,* Vol. 9, p. 724.
69. Bertolt Brecht, *Arbeitsjournal,* Vol. I, 1938-1942, ed. Werner Hecht (Frankfurt, 1973), p. 151.
70. Benjamin, *Briefe, op.cit.,* Vol. 2, p. 532.
71. Walter Benjamin, *Angelus Novus,* ed. Siegfried Unseld (Frankfurt, 1966), p. 315.

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speech and later) for Tretjakov's works, especially the novel *Generals*. This too is a sign of Brecht's influence. At that time Brecht reread the Fuchs and the reproduction essays approvingly. How closely he read the latter, however, is unclear, for Brecht disapproved of Benjamin's concept of the aura developed in the "work of art" essay.

These contradictory motifs repeatedly led Benjamin to explain what he meant. Yet, it is understandable how, under fascism, the highly sensitive Benjamin could be less clear than the more robust playwright, whose "crude style" did not force him constantly to draw seemingly inconsequential differences. Subterfuge plays a role in Benjamin, but with an ambiguous aim. He had to practice it *vis-à-vis* the reading public, the censorship officials, as well as his friends (Scholem, Adorno, Brecht). When could he have reported to Brecht on Bachofen, Wyneken and Franz Rosenzweig, or Klages and Carl Schmitt, all of whom he studied assiduously? When, to Scholem, on Engels or Korsch? to Adorno, on Tretjakov, Panferov and Gladkov? Adorno once said that Benjamin showed his cards to no one, and he meant it with obvious approval and admiration. This has to do with the concept of truth. Benjamin believed he had to "outfox" truth, for he suspected it of "being inaccessible to an autonomous mind," [72] and thus he employed the mystical technique of pseudo-epigraphy.

Brecht understood this less magnanimously, and this is the source of Tiedemann's claim (on the basis of Adorno's report), which Asja Lacis called ridiculous and Hannah Arendt impossible, that Benjamin had "been afraid" of Brecht and had written his "work of art" essay out of fear and in an effort to "surpass his radicalism." [73] Brecht also interpreted the concept of truth dialectically. But when it came to crucial questions, he became very precise and severe, especially in relation to the "renegades" of the late 1930s (such as Koestler, Glaeser, Sternberg, and Gide). An example of this is the scene of *Galilei*, written in 1938, right after Benjamin left Denmark: "Whoever does not know the truth," says Galileo, "is merely stupid. But whoever knows it and calls it a lie is a criminal!" [74]

For Brecht, historical materialism was a clear and intelligible doctrine. How much Benjamin irritated him in this regard can be seen from the *Work-Journal* entry of July 25, 1938, in which he initially reports about his guest's work on the Baudelaire study with a few benevolent sentences, but then with increasing irony and finally despair: "Benjamin is here. He is writing at his essay on Baudelaire. It's quite good. He proves how the idea of an immanent history-less epoch distorted literature after [18]48. The victory of the bourgeoisie at Versailles over the commune was anticipated. A pact with evil was made. It took the form of a flower. That is useful reading. Remarkably it is a

72. Theodor W. Adorno, "Charakteristik Walter Benjamins," in *Prismen. Kulturkritik und Gesellschaft* (Munich, 1963), p. 238.

73. Rolf Tiedemann, *Studien zur Philosophie Walter Benjamins*, with foreword by Theodor W. Adorno (Frankfurt, 1973), p. 112. Cf. also Witte, *op.cit.*, pp. 168ff. That relations between Benjamin and Brecht would also have "to be explained biographically and psychologically," as Tiedemnan believes (p. 112) cannot be denied, but it must be kept within limits and can hardly be interpreted as a kind of intellectual bondage, which would again lead to "saving" Benjamin from Brecht. Claus, *op.cit.*, accepts Tiedemann's statement without comment. He then sees the causes of this fear especially in the fact that Benjamin had to defend "contemplation as a condition of work at the expense of a possible need to communicate," in order not to be swallowed up in Brecht's much-described collective forms of work (p. 168).

74. Brecht, *Gesammelte Werke*, Vol. 3, p. 1300. On the concept of truth, cf. also Witte, *op.cit.*, p. 171: "While Brecht defines truth as 'what can be realized in a society,' " Benjamin, in accord with his negative theology, "defines truth as the 'radical smashing of the image-world.' There are, according to him, two methods of reaching it: theology and the 'materialist dialectics.' "

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far-fetched idea that enables Benjamin to write that his point of departure is something that he calls *aura*, which is connected with dreams (day-dreams). He says: when one feels a look directed at oneself even from behind, one answers it(!) The expectation that what one looks at looks back at one creates the aura. This is said to be disintegrating in recent times, together with the cultic. B[enjamin] discovered this in his analysis of film, where aura disintegrates by virtue of the reproduction of works of art. [This is] all mysticism, despite an anti-mystical attitude. That is how the materialist conception of history is adapted! It is quite horrible." [75]

People such as Benjamin, who rely on stylistic sensitivity and metaphysical receptiveness, are most intimidated by irony, sarcasm and a "crude style." Since Benjamin was a novice to Marxism, while Brecht had been tutored by Korsch and had studied Marx himself (Benjamin, as far as can be documented, had never done so extensively), the idea of a "dialectical materialist apprenticeship" explains some intimidation and fear, and should not be rejected *a priori*. Thus, despite his awareness of his own worth, Benjamin secretly felt dependent and feared that Brecht could break off the friendship.

What fascinated Benjamin about Brecht was his sternness which, since 1929,[76] Benjamin turned not only against leftist artists and entertainers who did not intervene and change the "conditions of production," but also against himself. In the first draft of his essay on Brecht's epic theater, Benjamin quotes from *Man Is Man*, and almost every line is a blow against some of his own positions. It is no longer a matter of "fidelity to one's own nature, but of the readiness to receive something new into oneself." [77] Now, Benjamin had a mystical-linguistic understanding of names — especially the names of people. "Nothing links a man to language as his name," he wrote in 1924.[78] In a sketch on philosophy of language, he claims that everything linguistic is the "direct expression of what is communicated in it;" and further: "In the name, man's intellectual nature is communicated to God." [79] Since he refers to Hamann, Scholem sought to place him in this tradition. The same can also be said of the Arcades Project and the Baudelaire essay. Benjamin's "doctrine of the similar," his theory of allegory and aesthetics of expression all fit into that mystical conception of the philosophy of language that Scholem recognizes as Benjamin's greatest achievement. But Benjamin's deepest passion consists precisely in remembering things that no longer exist. He considers historical "immersion" in detail to be his potential contribution to dialectical materialist aesthetics. In this regard Brecht must have been both a challenge and a shock to Benjamin.

Brecht wanted to replace Aristotelian catharsis with "astonishment," and this is where Benjamin found the legitimation for his own approach. This can be seen by how he emphasizes what is familiar in an otherwise relatively cool narrative analysis. Benjamin quotes the following verse from *Man Is Man:* "Do not persist on the wave that breaks on your foot; As long as it stands in the water, new waves will break on it." According to him: "The billowing wave is the real flow of life, the moment when its course comes to a stop, is felt as an ebbing back: astonishment is this ebbing back. The dialectic at a standstill is the real object. It is the rock from which the downward gaze immerses itself in that stream of things." This crest of waves that breaks on the

75. Brecht, *Arbeitsjournal*, Vol. I, 1938-1942, p. 16.
76. Benjamin, *Gesammelte Schriften, op.cit.*, Vol. 3, pp. 183ff.
77. Walter Benjamin, "Was ist das epische Theater? Eine Studie zu Brecht," in *Versuche über Brecht, op.cit.*, p. 16.
78. Walter Benjamin, *Angelus Novus, op.cit.*, pp. 15ff.
79. *Ibid.*, p. 13.

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"rock of astonishment" is both a "man's life" and a "word," for both caused existence to spray high out of the bottom of time and pause irridescent in empty space for a moment."[80] This is what interests Benjamin, and he describes how he intends to relate it to a materialist aesthetics. Brecht's challenge not to "persist" becomes Benjamin's epiphany; Brecht's dialectical movement, wave after wave, becomes Benjamin's "dialectic at a standstill." Only by freezing the object — something possible only as a momentary image — can Benjamin's "immersion" take place.

Similarly, Benjamin quotes the following passage from Brecht: "Hold on tight and sink! Be afraid! Go on, sink! At the bottom the lesson awaits you."[81] Benjamin's interpretation is that "To perish [*zugrunde gehen*] here always means: to sink to the bottom [*Grund*] of things."[82] Brecht's revisions of this fragment have shown, however, that the implication was not solace for those in despair. Brecht was interested in analyzing egoism, but abandoned this theme in the changed situation of the world economic crisis. Instead, he wrote *Die Massnahme* to emphasize the question of practical decision. Benjamin focused on and emphasized only one aspect. In this context, Adorno writes: "The technique of magnification sets the rigid in motion and brings the moving to a halt."[83] At times, this can block the view of the text as a whole. In this sense, it is interesting that, in the second, 1939 version of "What Is Epic Theater?" Benjamin edited out these interpretations, which were typically his own.

Why? In 1939, *Jetztzeit* (now-time), which Benjamin understood in his "Theses on the Philosophy of History" as the explosive combination of past and future (cf. Thesis 16) evidently was incompatible with his concept of the dialectic at a standstill. The contemplative component was too strong. Brecht's irritation becomes visible even in this small editorial decision. To him, Benjamin's insistence on penetrating depth did not move fast enough in the anti-fascist struggle. Brecht's political and artistic will is at work throughout. This may have been the greatest barrier between him and Benjamin, who apparently had an infinite capacity for absorption. For Brecht, the *Three Penny Opera,* anti-fascist tactics, and epistemological theory remain fused in the crude thinking of utility and change. "One can know things," he once said, "by changing them."[84] Ultimately, Brecht always sought the shortest way to the "present moment," while Benjamin, by emphasizing phenomenological and historical depth, the longest.

80. Walter Benjamin, "Was ist das epische Theater?" *op.cit.*, p. 21.
81. Cf. Walter Benjamin, *Understanding Brecht*, trans. Anna Bostock (London, 1977), p. 30.
82. Walter Benjamin, "Was ist das epische Theater?" *op.cit.*, p. 37.
83. Theodor W. Adorno, "Charakteristik Walter Benjamins," *op.cit.*, p. 245.
84. Brecht, *Gesammelte Werke*, Vol. 20, *op.cit.*, p. 172.

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DEMAND 22

A Song-Poem from the Gdansk Shipyards (August)

Stop begging our pardon all the time
And repeating that you are wrong.
Look at our tired faces,
As grey and dented as our lives.

Stop appealing to us
To maintain our dignity — and our work discipline.
Start reflecting, will you,
When you call us, "Dear Compatriots."

Stop talking about our stupidity,
Anarchy, and lack of experience.
Instead of random patching,
Start the real changes beginning with yourselves.

Stop taking about our hostility
Toward the regime and our neighbor.
Look instead at what we must bear,
And how much we could give to others.

Stop swindling people;
Stop closing your eyes and hiding your heads.
Stop transforming our dignity and culture
Into a gigantic liquor store.

Stop dividing us, making us quarrel among ourselves
By distributing points and privileges,
Hushing up uncomfortable facts,
Falsifying history.

Let's give the meaning back to many words
So they don't remain empty;
So we all could really live and work
In dignity and solidarity.

Stop begging our pardon all the time
And repeating that you are wrong.
Look at our mothers and wives,
As grey and dented as our lives.

Translated by Marta Petrusewicz

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BULGARIA: THE TAIWAN OF EASTERN EUROPE*

by Meraklia

Ten years ago we had the unity slogan: "25 equals 100," meaning that 25 years of Communist rule had brought the country forward an entire century. In 1976 we finally got the catchword: "1956-1976: Twenty Years of Happiness, Progress, etc." and a large portrait of Shivkoff, the head of state. In 1979, however, there was no "35-140" slogan. This is understandable, in view of the accelerated drop in the standard of living and the open and ever more apparent dependence of Bulgaria on the Soviet Union.

Pressure by the Soviet Union no longer consists only in the exploitation of the land resources, in cultural and political colonization. One can already add technological and energy dependence in all economic projects in Bulgaria. Emphasis has been placed on nuclear reactors (of Soviet origin), whereas hydraulic power stations would have better suited the structure of the region. Truck transportation rather than rail is being promoted, yet the country has no petroleum. Railways would have made it possible to utilize either electricity or coal — of bad quality, but readily available. To top it all, the country can be reached within a few hours by ferry from the Soviet Union: the boat can transport 108 cars or mlitary materiel and circumvent Romania altogether. Added to this is the pipeline connecting Bulgaria to the Soviet Union and the daily bombardment of Bulgarians with propaganda: "Eternal friendship," "Forever with the Soviets," "Soviet Science," etc.

There is still another dependence, less visible but just as deep-rooted: that of the Western multi-national corporations. Turnkey plants from the West are being purchased (Dutch greenhouses, French wine preparation plants, West-German, American and British products, etc.), and beyond that the assembly of certain textile plants (cheap shirts) or plants in the electronic sector (TVs for Belgium). In the eyes of other East-European states Bulgaria is another Korea, Taiwan or Singapore.

In spite of the five-year plan and omnipresent Soviet science, there is a shortage of goods and the situation is even worse than it was fifteen years ago: no fruits or vegetables, nothing in winter time and hardly anything in the stores until July; the "free markets" offer products at exorbitant prices. But between July and September, thanks to the great help by the forced brigades of school boys and university students, the harvests are secured. Clearly, in view of the prices offered to them the agricultural cooperative workers would rather let the fruit rot. During the summer months we all become cooks preparing canned fruits and vegetables for the winter, i.e., November to June. For some unexplained reasons only pork can be procured in the market place for the past four years. Apparently, the "princess", Shivkoff's daughter, has sold off for years the total production of lamb to Austria — without even realizing the extent of supplies. Fancy stories are once more being whispered concerning certain persons in the Dobrudja or the Rhodopes who are said to have meat or vegetables...

*The present article is from the magazine *Istok*, a "libertarian periodical for East European states." *Istok* was formed by the Leningrad anarcho-syndicalist group. The first issue appeared in Russian and Bulgarian. The second issue, from which this article is taken, has already been published in France by the Union des Anarchistes Bulgares; the third by the same organization, but in Bulgaria. The next issue is in preparation; it is to be printed by a group within Solidarity that espouses revolution and independence from the Catholic Church. A German translation of this article has also appeared in *Gegenstimmen* 3 (January-March, 1981), pp. 17-17. English translation by David Berger.

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Nevertheless, it does not follow that there is no consumption in the country. On the contrary, while there is a shortage in food, crystal ware from Bohemia are available at 14 Leva (about three days' wages), and so is wallpaper from the West, French cosmetics, Scotch whiskey.

The inefficient leadership becomes even more evident in the area of planning of cadres: there are too many physicians and engineers but not enough middle-level technicians. Although unemployment is slowly becoming evident, the workers are being "exported" to the USSR. (There are about 5,000 woodcutters in Siberia and almost as many workers since 1978 at the construction of the Orenburg gas pipeline); they are also being exported to other fraternal states in need of cadres, such as Cuba or Mozambique.

The regime also provides the Arab and North-African countries with labor at low prices. A French and even a Polish engineer will ask for one thousand dollars while a Bulgarian only asks for a fraction of that. In practice, a good Communist is usually sent off who will not emigrate or a technician whose family is kept hostage. After a few years he then returns to Bulgaria with the attributes of riches: a Western car, Western electric appliances and sufficient money to purchase an apartment.

Admiration for the West is not a mere handicap for the regime; it is being fully exploited: If you want dollars and a Western lifestyle, go to an Arab country. In exchange, the dollar candidate becomes a drudge and the embassy in the country in question cashes in half his salary. We have returned to the ancient slave days but this time it is the slave who asks for the yoke.

Inside the country as well the dollar plays a major role: in the "Kosekan" supermarkets Western products are exchanged only against Western currencies.

What about the opposition? All of the East-European states seem to be collapsing under the *samisdat*. What are the Bulgarians doing?

There is first of all the information gap: When there is a resistance movement against the regime (the Right, the CIA, and even the anarchists), the Western press did not print anything. When the "Goriani" appeared (partisans without foreign connections), almost up to 1964, there was no news about them either. Generally, preventive measures were taken in Bulgaria every time there was internal convulsion in an Eastern-European country. In 1968 all of the university examinations were advanced one month in order to prevent any danger of infection, and after 1969 civilian and military exercises were introduced during the summer for all men over 16 years of age.

In practice there are three types of opposition: total instinctive rejection, latent opposition and political shock.

The regime has so frequently been despoiled by the Shivkoff family and the omnipresent Soviet Union (like the United States in certain Latin American countries) that most of the people are against it. This is well known to the head of state security and the Soviet ambassador (these are the commanders). They also know how to make use of the safety valves, such as sporting events, internal racism and xenophobia. Let us for the moment put aside the Macedonian question which requires a special study. Thus, many people in recent years have been convinced that the shortage in meat, cheese, clothing, shoes, etc., resulted from the presence of Greek and Yugoslav tourists — at least just as poor — who take everything that is Bulgarian with them...

It is impossible to manipulate the latent opposition as in the first case for it invloves a constant rejection of the labor system and a rejection of Communist morality. The first covers the majority of workers. Their motto is: They only seem to pay us, so we only seem

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to work. This is the general attitude of workers in Eastern Europe. Here also graft has become the natural supplement to wages. If it is refused, the reaction is brutal.

Such acceptance of theft to regain salary losses explains the acceptance of another form of delinquency appearing particularly among the youth: destruction of telephone booths and cars. (But who has got a car? Almost anyone who has been abroad or who has a good position with the regime.) In addition there is also rejection of regular work and alcoholism.

Direct shock involves only a few people, the victims of repression: some of whom we know about have been publicized by Amnesty International.

But what about the meat workers who, in January 1976, struck in a Sofia district? And how about those who were murdered because they could not understand police checks after 30 years of socialism? Such severity proves that a constant opposition is impossible for the moment and emigration has been on the increase. Mechanics employed abroad in the trial years or permanently are emigrating in spite of their families being kept in the country as hostages.

This account would be incomplete without the clairvoyance of Petrisht; she sees everything although she is blind and helps the police in solving complicated cases. Also deserving mention are the flying saucers being promoted by the regime until a secret report fell into the hands of the intelligentsia: six pages translated from the Russian and written by a certain angel, Felix Yurtvitchy, with the hackneyed cliché: the little green homunculi. The Romans ruled with "bread and circuses;" the Shivkoff regime and the Soviet Union rule without bread but with spirits and xenophobia — a rather weak foundation on which to build.

ON KURT H. WOLFF'S WORK*

by Peter Ludes

During the past decade, Kurt H. Wolff has published three books consisting mostly of essays originally written over the past half century.[1] One of Wolff's stories, written in 1932 while he was still in his twenties, is called "Perpetually Emergent Revolution" [*Immerwährende Revolution*].[2] In 1935, he wrote "Processus" [*Vorgang*],[3] which Hermann Broch described as a rational poem marked by an existential frame of mind — at a time when existentialism had not yet been discovered. Wolff concludes his survey of "Phenomenology and Sociology" with a suggestion "of what an attitude toward our time might be that is historically more adequate than Marx's, Husserl's, Schutz's and the ethnomethodologists': it is one of deeper radicalness in two quite different but mutually complementary senses: a more comprehensive grasp of the present situation of man and simultaneously a grasp of ever deeper levels of my and my fellowmen's stock of

*Translated by Paul Breines.

1. *Vorgang und immerwährende Revolution. Prosa und Szenen* (Wiesbaden, 1978); *Trying Sociology* (New York, 1974); *Surrender and Catch: Experience and Inquiry Today* (Boston Studies in the Philosophy of Science, Vol. LI: Dordrecht and Boston, 1976); to date Wolff has also written numerous essays on Durkheim, Simmel, Mannheim and the sociology of knowledge in general.

2. *Vorgang und immerwährende Revolution, op.cit.*, pp. 75-84.

3. *Ibid.*, pp. 5-46, 47.

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knowledge and experience."[4] This "is the direction of 'surrender and catch.' "

The starting point of Wolff's reflections is that "to think customarily is to think unscientifically." Thus, social science without social philosophy, or social philosophy without social science, "tends to be ideological; that is, to elaborate customs and to rationalize interests." The goal of critical studies is to improve our capacities for moral decisions.[5] According to Wolff, the essential criterion of truth is "agreement with the result of the most rigorously imaginable intrasubjective examination of the student's most important *experiences*."[6] The "yield, harvest, outcome, necessarily emerging structure" of such a total experience is a new "catch" of connections and previously inadequately understood relations. This concept of surrender and catch is a result of Wolff's empirical work in Loma, a relatively isolated community of some 200 mostly Spanish-speaking members in New Mexico in 1940, 1942 and 1944. It is the critical overcoming or suspending of customary concepts "as best we can, for only in this way, by not relying on them, can we hope to come on a concept and on concepts that may be less inadequate. . . . This is what being radical, what seeking the root of man now means."[7]

What is all this about? (1) Who can surrender and make new catches? (2) When is surrender possible and how does Wolff use this concept? (3) Are surrender and catch pertinent to sociological investigation (a) only "before and after sociology" or (b) as a particular path toward understanding and explaining a segment of the social world "within sociology"? (4) Are surrender and catch valuable even after they have passed and exist only as memory, since those who experience them have changed? And, finally (5), if surrender and catch are useful for radically challenging traditional concepts, how can they be further developed and taught?

(1) According to Wolff, everyone is capable of surrender although he notes, "I don't know whether its first experience is possible without love, but I don't think that without love a human being can attain the maturity and security that allows him or her to 'let go,' to experience surrender."[8] Yet, even then, the person prepared for surrender may not be sufficiently open "because the received notion has too much hold over him." It is also possible that he "suspends too much: he takes as a received notion that which alone makes surrender possible, namely, the faith [!] in the possibility of surrender."[9] "Part of the unsuspendable basis of surrender," Wolff continues, "is the faith that suspension of received notions liberates us and commits us further to this liberating faith, and that this suspension can occur unexpectedly as well as be willed. . . . A related part of what can*not* be suspended — lest surrender be betrayed and there is no surrender — is the faith that the maximum suspension of received notions (of one's 'culture') does not reduce one to a biological organism nor drive one insane, but, on the contrary, is *at this time in human history the utmost exercise of one's reason, of human reason* — of the capacity to find out what is *for* man."[10]

What seemed a smooth path to the acquisition of knowledge has become entangled. The majority of any society hardly possess sufficient ego strength to suspend what has been learned. There are, moreover, still fewer who are familiar with the "faith" in surrender and catch and thus able to decide for or against it. But even those who pass through the needle's eye are confronted with a problem similar to the basic difficulty

4. "Phenomenology and Sociology," in Tom Bottomore and Robert Nisbet, eds., *A History of Sociological Analysis* (New York, 1978), p. 540.
5. *Trying Sociology, op.cit.*, pp. 221, 223.
6. *Ibid.*, p. 79.
7. *Ibid.*, p. 438.
8. *Surrender and Catch, op.cit.*, p. 185.
9. "Surrender and the Body," *Cultural Hermeneutics*, 2 (May 1974), p. 21.
10. *Ibid.*, p. 22.

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facing Habermas' theory of discourse. It is the character of such a discourse to continue — unhindered, intact, non-violent, free of hierarchy and discouragement — although all participants are not in accord.[11] This is problematic for those who participate in the discussion and for those who do not. When, for a viable outcome, a discourse requires an unrestricted amount of time, it is in principle possible only for that tiny minority with extraordinary freedom in their schedules. It is furthermore questionable whether, in comparison to what might be accomplished, the results are worth the effort it entails. Since during discussion both the world and the validity of the information used at the outset change, those who deem these factors important will be less rigid in their judgment of the discussion's acceptable truths. The time frame appropriate to carrying out the discussion is thus itself in need of discussion. But the participants, in pursuing the discussion, return to diverse environments while new groups, not initially involved, may present new arguments and so on. All of this limits not only the feasibility of a discourse but its practical meaning as well. Likewise in the case of surrender, it may take quite a while before one can suspend all one has learned. And it takes longer still to arrive at new truths. Few fish are to be caught in Wolff's net.

Those who have surrendered experience radical doubt. They may therefore conclude, contrary to Wolff's faith, that the whole process — putting everything but oneself into question and thus both the possibility of surrender and the faith that surrender may emancipate us — is not worth the effort, given what one might have learned and done politically. Those who believe in surrender and catch might argue that no true surrender can lead to such a catch; that in such a case the instrumental standpoint, the expectation of measurable results, would not be included. In Wolff's words: "The result of surrender may not be a concept in the everyday or scientific sense of the word but, for instance, a decision, a poem, a painting, the clarification or urging of an existential question, a change in the person: ontologically it always is a new conceiving, a new concept, a beginning, a new being-in-the-world."[12] When so much importance is attributed to the subjective factor, as it often has been in recent decades, and when the subjective factor is conceived in terms of single individuals rather than classes, the results of surrender as Wolff sees them also have political meaning. Yet, not everyone can really surrender. The requisite strength and time are not always available. And the goal of explaining to others what has happened leads to further protracted processes.

(2) Not only are many unable to surrender, but surrender itself is not possible under all conditions. We need not put in question customary concepts when they correspond sufficiently to our (customary or developed) standards of what is subjectively meaningful. But there are situations in which customary concepts do not suffice: when, for example, we are outsiders, strangers or foreigners. Surrender is the extreme situation of the outsider. Yet those who surrender will not know which customary concepts suffice in the new context. Instead, they suspend all customary concepts and behaviors. The new experience, cleansed as much as possible of all customary opinions and so on, is the

11. Cf., e.g., Niklas Luhmann, "Soziologie der Moral," in Luhmann and Stephan H. Pfürtner, eds., *Theorietechnik und Moral* (Frankfurt am Main, 1978), p. 21; Harald Weinrich, "System, Diskurs, Didaktik und die Diktatur des Sitzfleisches," in Franz Maciejewski, ed., *Theorie der Gesellschaft oder Sozialtechnologie. Beiträge zur Habermas-Luhmann-Diskussion*; Theorie-Diskussion, Supplement 1 (Frankfurt am Main, 1975); Roland Eckert and Alois Hahn, "Sozialismus ohne Dogma — Einige aktuelle Probleme," in Erich Arndt, Wolfgang Michalski and Bruno Molitor, eds., *Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft, Ordnung ohne Dogma* (Tübingen, 1975), esp. ch. III; and "Marxist Ethics and the Future of Eastern Europe: An Interview with Agnes Heller," *Telos*, 38 (Winter 1978-79), pp. 161-162.

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source of truth in relation to the new and perhaps novel phenomena. No questionnaires or experiments mediate between those who surrender and that in relation to which the person who is surrendering experiences something new.[13]

Wolff's concept of surrender is rooted in Mannheim's sociology of knowledge, according to which the interest in both preserving and overcoming the status quo, that is, ideology and utopia, distort our understanding of social reality. In Mannheim's view, this danger can be dealt with best by the "socially unattached intelligentsia." Those who surrender are, so to speak, less socially attached than ever. Thus, surrender ought to lead to more adequate contexts of life experiences and interpretations of the world; it is of extreme importance for any critical philosopher, social scientist, and political activist.

(3) Surrender and catch, according to Wolff, pertain to every sociological study. But they have special meaning in connection with unique phenomena: "What is essential, unique, exclusive of man is that which is universally human. . . . It implies that we can do justice to what he shares with other phenomena of the universe only by description, definition, reduction to instances of generalizations, and the like."[14] Now if uniquely human phenomena, as distinct from what humans share with animals or inanimate objects, are vital to understanding and explaining people and society, such phenomena are in need of sociological examination. Yet surrender and catch lead to the following problems. In his essay, "On Multiple Realities," Schutz says that "the demarcation line" of scientific investigations "is the locus of the points actually interesting the scientist and at which he has decided to stop further research and analysis. Secondly, the stating of the problem at once reveals its open horizons, the outer horizon of connected problems which will have to be stated afterwards, as well as the inner horizon of all the implications hidden within the problem itself which have to be made visible and explicated in order to solve it." But those who fully surrender do not decide "to stop further research and analysis." They proceed "as best they can" as long as they succeed in suspending customary concepts and until they reach the conclusion that at this point in history and in their own lives the questioning can cease since something has become perfectly indubitible. In the protected scientific environment, free of concrete activities and strict pressures of time, this will not be much. But Wolff's understanding of intersubjective truth goes beyond the prevailing conception of science. His view requires that existential scientists take their own experiences and their most intensive examination of those experiences as the one basis of judgments and conclusions.

(4) Without necessarily assuming that people have some unabating need for inescapable truth, it can be said that many adults have had certain extraordinary experiences which for either a short stretch or an entire lifetime transform their previously unexamined frame of reference. Such experiences are normally seen as quite intimate and in scientific fields one rarely speaks of them. They nevertheless constitute essential factors in social existence. The concepts of surrender and catch can be seen as the positive equivalent of traumatic experiences: the existentially secured point at which something or someone is beyond doubt. But, as indicated, a certain degree of ego strength is a psychological prerequisite to surrender. The question thus arises: is there a tension between the realization of this ego strength and solidarity, and how is it balanced? Is the need to know more and to be more highly developed

12. "Surrender and the Body," *op.cit.*, p. 20.

13. Cf. Paul Diel, *Psychologie de la motivation. Théorie et application thérapeutique* (Paris, 1969, first edition 1947), p. 222: "Human beings carry within themselves the laboratory for realizing — or for the possibility of realizing — the primordial condition of all scientific study based on observation and experience: impartiality, the self-objectivation of the subject."

14. *Surrender and Catch*, *op.cit.*, p. 77. Cf. also *Trying Sociology*, *op.cit.*, ch. 27.

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generally connected to experiences of knowing more than others; of being, so to speak, more highly developed than others according to subjective, class-specific, historically and culturally conditioned standards?

Marx was aware of this problem. In his *Theories of Surplus Value* he states: "at first the development of the capacities of the *human* species takes place at the cost of the majority of human individuals and even classes (!), in the end it breaks through this contradiction and coincides with the development of the individual; the higher development of individuality is thus only achieved by a historical process during which individuals are sacrificed, for the interests of the species in the human kingdom, as in the animal and plant kingdoms, always assert themselves at the cost of the interests of individuals, because these interests of the species coincide only with the *interests of certain individuals,* and it is this coincidence which constitutes the strength of these privileged individuals."[15] In another context Marx observed that "at the same time, however, the masses are more disciplined and have in their hands better means of rejecting this progress which unfolds at their cost."[16] Taken together these statements express the conflict between, on the one hand, historical development which proceeds by granting advantages to some and imposing sacrifices on others, and, on the other hand, people who no longer accept that the higher development of the species should take place only at the price of their own life chances. In this connection, surrender, as the most radical form of intersubjectively arriving at concepts, surely says something about the historical-social position of the surrenderers. Yet one can readily agree with Wolff that, compared with other methods of knowledge, surrender and catch are better equipped to overcome such limits. Existential truth has gained vital importance in a period of history when objective scientific knowledge has contributed to the unprecedented danger of the extermination of mankind.

(5) The introduction to surrender and catch by way of college courses leads to new problems. In the words of one of Wolff's students: "I was at first enthusiastic. Even with this many people and excluding factors such as being tired or out of sorts, if I had a question I raised it, but it would never keep going. Often, I felt that I was being swallowed up by the largeness of the class or your reluctance to discuss. I began to feel that when I had something I shouldn't impose it on the class."[17] This problem gets more severe in many schools that are not as well equipped as the universities of the sort at which Wolff teaches. Yet, as one of his students has also noted, discussions of total experiences are of special significance: "areas of experience which are hard to talk about. These 'blind spots' affect the relation of the sociologist to his subject material, since they affect his relations with himself and other people. This is precisely the significance of the fact that a sociologist is a part of the society which he studies. To find a way of talking about such experiences and thereby to bring them into conscious consideration is a major problem for sociology. Moreover, the particular hard-to-talk-about experience — surrender — is further relevant to sociology in that it provides an 'extraordinary perspective.' "

"I don't know," Wolff says, "what the impact of these tutorials was, let alone has been, if any. At one time I had thought of writing my students to ask them, but most, I am sure, couldn't have told anyway and if they had answered might well have been polite and unreliable. It just could be that the tutorial gave encouragement, especially to the more gifted ones [!], to respect and trust themselves more than they did before.

15. Karl Marx, *Theories of Surplus Value,* Part II (London, 1969), p. 118.
16. Marx, in a letter to Nikolai Franzewitsch Danielson, April 10, 1879, *MEW* Vol. 34, p. 375.
17. *Surrender and Catch, op.cit.,* p. 311.
18. *Ibid.,* p. 320.

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Some of the documents I reproduced excerpts of indicate this, but I have no idea how long such encouragement, if there was, lasted and whether it might not have come some other time from somewhere else."[19] But as we have already seen, ego strength, health and interest are conditions that must be fulfilled to make possible surrender and catch. This is, then, a circle, although it is one that at various points permits one to get on.

If the starting point of generating concepts adequate to understanding, explaining, and transforming existing relations is to radically place in question the scientist's existential truths, this implies the dynamic connectedness of science and social reality. At the same time, attempts are repeatedly made to overcome received concepts, as in scientific revelations. They are attempts only, since the received views may appear immutable. This may not be because they have been proven absolutely correct, but because no better concepts were found. Expressed tautologically, the catch of Wolff's surrender often is "only" the concept of and faith in surrender and catch. But this is nothing less than the perpetual attempt to reach both the existentially experienced limits of human freedom and alternatives, and the unrenounceable belief that more freedom and alternatives to the existing relations are always possible.

19. *Ibid.*, p. 259.

G.W.F. Hegel: The Berlin Phenomenology

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REVIEWS:

Maurice A. Finocchiaro. *Galileo and the Art of Reasoning: Rhetorical Foundations of Logic and Scientific Method.* Boston Studies in the Philosophy of Science, No. 61. Boston: Reidel, 1980. xx plus 478 pages. Cloth: $42; Paper: $21.

Finocchiaro has been identified in the past as having "recently compiled a book on Galileo."[1] Whether meant as a friendly, innocuous synonym for "written" or chosen for its specific connotations, the verb compiled hit the mark. As in previous works, where Finocchiaro precisely counts, lists, then analyzes "style and method of criticism"[2] through scrupulous textual hermeneutics, in this massive contribution to Galileo studies he has taken what might be called "textual mania" to an unequaled extreme. As a practicing textual maniac he has introduced innovations that make today's most exotic literary criticism tame by comparison. Finocchiaro exhibits a revived malady among scholars: *pathologia textualis.*

I do not mean to make light of Finocchiaro's work. On the contrary, his achievement in this book can hardly be faulted. Yet, as he is himself aware, in addition to substantive accuracy and theoretical cogency, there are always the needling demands of communicative rhetoric — as his subtitle suggests. If his textual mania slips from a healthy apostasy from received wisdom (Galileo is a fine model for this) into a form of pathological hermeneutics (the hallmark of which, more than anything else, is sheer unreadability), it is not due to sloth, blindness to essentials, ideological distortion, or the other usual causes. It is because he cares too much about one text and its author and is committed to rescuing both from legions of (mis)-interpreters — none of whom escapes Finocchiaro's accusations. He has spent several years thinking about a single treatise published in 1632. This kind of interpretive zeal is comparable in the West only to certain medieval Aristotelians and 19th-century German cultural historians. Finocchiaro has bolted away from contemporary approaches to texts into a fortress of logical debate that looks from the outside like an IBM center but is more like an Icelandic monastery inside.

The book's goal is to analyze Galileo's *Dialogue Concerning the Two Chief World Systems* in terms of "the arts of logical reasoning, rhetorical persuasion, philosophical reflection, and scientific investigation" (p. ix). Finocchiaro carefully points out the book's portions relevant for laymen, rhetoricians, cognitive psychologists, linguists, religious historians, cultural historians, logicians, philosophers of science, and historians of science (p. ix). The ideal reader of the entire work would require membership in all these groups, plus their accumulated patience. To move, within two covers, from conventional analyses of Galileo's rhetorical subterfuges against official oppression to whole pages of formalist argument is to cross fences only a few readers know how to climb. Since my own interest is in hermeneutics and not in logic, the sections devoted to formal analysis seem less compelling than others. This reverses Finocchiaro's priorities since he clearly wants to impress fellow logicians with his Galilean approach, and to offer an entirely new theory of rationality, much more than he wants to contribute to hermeneutical practice. In fact, the word "hermeneutics" never appears in the book and Gadamer is not among the writers represented in the 250-item bibliography. Nor are Hirsch, Betti, Ricoeur, Apel, or any other contemporary hermeneutical theorists, which in turn makes the absence of Dilthey

1. See "Notes on Contributors," *Telos*, 41 (Fall 1979), p. 2.
2. Maurice Finocchiaro, "Gramsci's Crocean Marxism," *Telos*, 41 (Fall 1979), p. 32.

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and Schleiermacher unsurprising. In their place are preeminently Croce, then Scriven, Feyerabend (though grudgingly), Popper, and even Ortega y Gassett. If it seems astonishing that a writer whose goal is to reinterpret (once and for all!) a famous text without glancing at the hermeneutical tradition, this is but a minor peculiarity when compared to other aspects of the book.[3]

What Finocchiaro has produced are three separate monographs.[4] The first comprises "soft" approaches to Galileo's text, with emphasis on the "alogical but not illogical techniques" (p. 435) used to convince an unbelieving Aristotelian community, plus some commentary concerning the scientific merit of the book by today's standards, mixed with historical notes on its original reception at the time.[5] The second monograph is a series of related review essays Finocchiaro compiled (*sic*) in an attempt to locate his ideas with reference to everyone else writing on Galileo, logical processes and the theory of reasoning. He disagrees with *everyone*, and the fun is in watching how he does it — even with such scholarly icons as Koyré and Drake. The last book is almost entirely formal and the one upon which Finocchiaro's new Galileo hermeneutic will be judged most rigorously. He obviously considers it important, judging from the excruciating pains he took in laying out each formal analysis.

Finocchiaro's objectives seem to number at least four. The most obvious aim is to present Galileo as displayed in this one work as a master logician: a methodologist of reasoned thought.[6] This is done by contrasting the pig-headed Simplicio (Galileo's version of an Aristotelian) with the limpid analyses of Salviati (Galileo's own voice) and the accompanying wisdom of Sagredo (Salviati's pal). The point is not to show that Galileo was a great scientist and that he still deserves study for revelations about the solar system. Rather, the book is a "classic in the art of rhetoric" (p. 70) and needs to be studied for its methodological practice in scientific thinking or, as Finocchiaro puts it, "its methodological content as its indirect scientific content" (p. 78), i.e., in place of

3. Finocchiaro wishes to rearrange our understanding of rationality. Yet, his inspiration comes primarily from W.W. Bartley, Scriven, and Popper — a small if celebrated group. What Finocchiaro has taken seriously he has done quite thoroughly: in the bibliography Scriven appears nine times, Stillman Drake (dean of Galileo scholars), twenty, Feyerabend thirteen, Finocchiaro himself thirteen. But beyond these tight confines, he has not troubled himself very much.

4. The book falls into three parts and 17 chapters, parts of which have appeared elsewhere in different forms between 1974 and 1979. Part I (Chapters 1-5) is "Galileo's *Dialogue*," a broadly focused analysis, mostly of the pre-logical structure of the book, with special attention to various "unfair" criticisms of it. Part II, "Logical and Methodological Critiques," is a series of review-essays that actually disrupt the book's thrust. Although items and topics are incorporated in each of these chapters (6-13), they mostly treat the following authors' criticisms of Galileo: Feyerabend, Clavelin, Feyerabend again, Koyré, Emil Strauss, Favaro, Drake, Clavelin again, P.C. Wason and P.N. Johnson-Laird, Perelman, Popper, Bar-Hillel, Scriven, and Toulmin. This takes us through about 160 pages of constructive polemics and to the book's centerpiece, Chapters 14-17. Whereas Part III isn't much help unless one is conversant with the sources Finocchiaro criticizes, the only stumbling block to an appreciation of this last and most elaborate section is an advanced knowledge of formal argument analysis. And finally, in a conclusion that could stand independently of the text, Finocchiaro summarizes his contribution to a revised theory of rationality derived from Galileo's book.

5. Also slipped in is a schematic (Chapter 2) of the book's "logical structure," which is out of place since it bears on Part III.

6. Stillman Drake believes, along with most historians of science, that the later work, *Discourses and Demonstrations Concerning Two New Sciences*, is Galileo's "supreme contribution to physics." According to Finocchiaro, this does not mean, however, that it is his most important book (pp. 68-73). Cf. Galileo Galilei, *Dialogue Concerning the Two Chief World Systems*, translated with revised notes by Stillman Drake (Berkeley, 1967), p. xxv.

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sheer "scientific content." This he proposes to do through the "contextual method" — a low-grade hermeneutical strategy he takes from W.R. Shea.

Another explicit goal is to offer a theory of rationality *qua* logical processes and evaluation, based entirely on the "concrete" arguments in the *Dialogue* ("the best and richest collection of arguments available anywhere" — p. 419) and not on formal, irrelevant, concocted examples that Finocchiaro claims undercut the utility of most logic textbooks. This is where Finocchiaro breaks with traditional Galileo scholars as well as logicians. Also, it is here that his hermeneutics is most strained. Finocchiaro's position on rationality is something of a compromise between the hard and soft views now current, mainly because he is willing to allow rhetoric its due, along with the notion of evaluation *as* reasoning, while at the same time insisting upon the *ultimate* primacy of deduction (pp. 443-444). Though this sounds like soft-pedalled Feyerabendism, Finocchiaro is much more tied to the "rigor" of deductive logic than appears here: "deduction, besides being one of the macroscopic elements of reasoning, might be the basis of all others" (p. 433). His heart is clearly in two places. He wants to bring realism into logic as a discipline, and simultaneously illuminate rationality through a non-dogmatic "reconstruction" of real, live, practical thinking, *but* through careful, formal fragmentation. In short, like all logicians since Aristotle have done, he is looking for the traditional grail: sheer into blocks the apparent irrationality of discourse with tools hardened in reason's furnace. Finocchiaro is willing to undertake a certain amount of reductionism to get this done, and here his hermeneutic is again pushed to the wall.

The other two intentions of the book, less openly announced, involve first an extended illustration of how this new type of hermeneutics is carried out.[7] Whereas at times Finocchiaro takes circumspection to unrivalled heights, in this case he skims lightly over the surface. The result is that his charges against other interpreters are not convincing. It is not that Finocchiaro is a poor hermeneutician, but one ignorant of an earlier tradition that would have aided him in highlighting deficiencies of earlier Galileo interpreters.[8]

7. It is interesting that Finocchiaro frequently attacks interpreters for decontextualizing Galileo's remarks and arguments, but nowhere discusses why his "contextual method" is epistemologically superior to the conventional dismemberment texts undergo over generations of scholarly discussion. Schleiermacher provided extensive guidance along these lines, from the very curt ("Warn against hastily extracting passages from their context") to the very long, particularly in his work on translating Plato. Cf. F.D.E. Schleiermarcher, *Hermeneutics: The Handwritten Manuscripts*, ed. H. Kimmerle, trans. J. Duke and J. Forstman (Missoula, Mont., 1977), p. 221, and Friedrich Schleiermacher, *Introduction to the Dialogues of Plato*, trans. William Dobson (New York, 1973; reprint of 1836 edition).

8. Let us see what effect this has, in one specific instance, on Finocchiaro's treatment of the *Dialogue*. In what is probably his central chapter (16), "Galileo as a Logician: A Model and a Data Base" (pp. 343-412), Finocchiaro analyzes 16 arguments from the book, each into three components, "object argument" (Aristotle's), "meta-argument" (Galileo's rebuttal), and "comments" (Finocchiaro's evaluation of both, but mostly of the latter). There is some very complicated business in this chapter, such as: "It should be noticed that I have stated neither Galileo's final conclusion (from G1, G21, G22, G23, G24, and G3) nor the conclusion, G2, to be drawn from G21, G22, G23, and G24" (p. 382); or "G2111212 is saying that: (F1) if [(if R then S) if not-P] then [if P then not-(if R then S)], which is right. G2111211 says that. . ." (p. 383). But at a much more basic level, one notices throughout that the "object argument" — putatively Finocchiaro's restatement in concise prose and formal coding (A1, A2, A3, etc.) of Aristotle's opinion about a given problem is extremely brief when compared to the "meta-argument," Galileo's part of the dialogue. And one also notices that whereas in his "comments" Finocchiaro is often willing to allow some latitude for Galileo's errors in logic or calculations, he does not extend the same favor to Aristotle's slips.

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Last among the four goals of his book, there is Finocchiaro's strident proposition that Galileo's *form* of reasoning can be ordered in such a way as to reduce the fallacies that crop up in contemporary scientific and philosophical thought. As he puts it, the book's "practical justification lies [in helping to rectify] the preponderance of fallacious reasoning in the contemporary American scene" (p. 424). The logician's robe hides a philosopher king! But for all that, it is a valuable observation, i.e., that rationality is *not* subject to the sort of changing pressures revealed by the sociology of knowledge (Finocchiaro does not use the term). The latter can be useful, but only in rhetoric: those alogical aspects of argumentation that are necessarily time-bound. Thus, he has it both ways on his broad-scale "reform of logic": "it must recognize the distinct importance of rhetorical analysis. . .while retaining the supremacy of logical analysis" (p. 439). With this he can keep Popper without throwing Feyerabend to the wind.

The first "technical" problem with Finocchiaro's book is that a sizeable effort must go into chasing down passage locations if one either does not have the Favaro edition or, worse yet, does not read Italian.[9] Most of the books's readers are probably going to be much more interested in Finocchiaro's pyrotechnics as a logician than in recovering Galileo's "real" meaning. If one is interested in the latter, however, the concordance-*Arbeit* becomes nothing but cumbersome.[10] It is almost as if Finocchiaro realized that most readers would be paying less attention to Galileo's text than to his formal transformation of it. As it stands, whole chapters lose their interest because the crucial connection between Finocchiaro's interpretation and reconstruction and Galileo's own words can be made only through preposterous effort.

Besides a copy of the Drake translation, a large number of other texts are essential. Though one cannot ask that a scholarly work, like a poem, be largely self-contained, owing to Finocchiaro's intensely bookish, even scholastic, attention to textual nuance, and because his claims are frequently tendentious, *Galileo and the Art of Reasoning* becomes a mandatory invitation to a dozen other works.[11] It is less a

9. The pre-hermeneutical act is to array the right auxiliary texts before the "target" text in question. The most obvious and essential book one must have even to begin studying Finocchiaro is Galileo's *Dialogue* in the Drake translation, "not easily excelled," though not without "imperfections" (p. 440; p. 452, note 2, and pp. 237-245). This is vital though an imperfect (*sic*) tool in making one's way through Finocchiaro since most of the thousands of page citations he gives are to the Italian edition, edited by Favaro as Vol. 7 of the *Edizione Nationale* of Galileo's works. Pages 441-451 of Finocchiaro's book are a "page concordance to *Dialogue* editions," specifically those of Favaro, the Edition of 1632, Pagnini, Drake, and Salusbury-Santillana. At 489 pages, the Favaro edition leaves plenty of room in which Finocchiaro can move, and calls for hundreds of trips to the concordance for the diligent reader using the Drake translation.

10. Furthermore, it is often impossible to use precisely, because when Finocchiaro cites, e.g., "F195.31-196.12" (line numbers follow the decimal) as he does on p. 392, the concordance to Drake can only reveal that 195 is 169.7 in the English translation and 196 is 170.6. Doubtless this *seems* a small enough problem that interpolation could remedy. But when Finocchiaro's text has on one page ten specific references to Favaro (see p. 373), each reference technically coded as a sub-argument to a major premise, the reader is quickly and understandably reduced to frustrated rage.

11. Appreciation of most of the second part requires careful textual checking — since this is Finocchiaro's own *modus operandi* — of the following: Maurice Clavelin's *The Natural Philosophy of Galileo;* Paul Feyerabend's *Against Method* and several essays; Alexandre Koyré's *Etudes Galinéenes* (3 vols); Finocchiaro's own *History of Science as Explanation*; Emil Strauss' "Notes" to the 1891 German edition of the *Dialogue*; Favaro's edition; Chaim Perelman and L. Olbrechts-Tyteca's *The New Rhetoric;* P.C. Watson and P.N. Johnson-Laird's *Psychology of Reasoning*; Y. Bar-Hillel's papers; Toulmin's *Uses of Argument*; Wesley Salmon's *Logic*; R.B. Angell's *Reasoning and Logic*; Scriven's *Reasoning*; and B. Mates' *Elementary Logic. All* these

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book than a meta-book, and seems happily designed as such. While this is hardly new, Finocchiaro's distinction lies in the extent to which the most derogatory persuit of other works is carried out. When one reads that Lear is a great tragic character, the temptation to reread it is small; but if Lear is portrayed as shallow and actually comic, a return to the text is demanded. Hence the birth of a meta-book.

Yet for all its grasping of sources and other materials relevant to Galileo and logical method, a few texts that could well have been used were not.

It would seem, for instance, that all the major works dealing with Galileo's treatment of Ptolemaic and Aristotelian astronomy and physics would be listed in Finocchiaro's lengthy bibliography. Yet if one returns to the standard English edition of Aristotle's works to read *De Caelo*, from which many of Simplicio's views supposedly come, one also finds that one Lane Cooper, an English professor with a fine knowledge of Greek and a sense of humor, in 1935 published *Aristotle, Galileo and the Tower of Pisa*.[12] No reference is made to this book either by Finocchiaro or by Drake in his monumental *Galileo at Work: His Scientific Biography* (Chicago, 1978). Why? Perhaps because Cooper was a fool, but a reading of his book suggests otherwise. Cooper tries to correct many mistaken beliefs, among them that Galileo dropped weights from the Tower of Pisa, and, much more to the point here, that Aristotle said they would hit the ground at different times in proportion to their weights. (For each contention he supplies numerous documents translated from Italian and Greek.)

Cooper's work is an effort to show the mythological aspects of Galileo's achievement, and the concomitant caricature of Aristotle's alleged blindness to the virtues of simple empiricism. What Cooper shows is that the passage from *The Two New Sciences* where Simplicio (playing the same role) supposedly quotes Aristotle[13] is pure fabrication on Galileo's part. In the *Physics* and in *De Caelo* there are indeed relevant passages, but they turn on many subtleties, as Cooper explains, not least of which is the translation of the Greek for "fall," as in "falling bodies." The point is that Galileo in his youth was an ardent Aristotelian (which Cooper documents), yet "once he had to his own satisfaction upset the supposed contention of Aristotle as to falling bodies, Galileo's reaction to it betrays the animus of one who has outgrown an error, and now detects this error as a kind of vulgarity in his rivals. In order to abash the 'Aristotelians' of his prime, Galileo...like many another intense individualist of the Renaissance, becomes unjust to Aristotle" (pp. 42-43).[14] Over the centuries Galileo's apparently hard-nosed empiricism has so thoroughly triumphed over previous modes of scientific inquiry that Simplicio has been taken, without much recourse to Aristotle's actual texts, as the legitimate voice of an earlier, more primitive, era. And to read either of Galileo's books leaves no doubt that Simplicio was no match for Salviati, Galileo's frontman.

This is where hermeneutics becomes vital to all interpretive endeavors, even one as rarefied and formalistic as Finocchiaro's. At one point he gives proper credit to one of his colleagues: "English-speaking people are fortunate that there exists a scholar like

are pivotal to Finocchiaro's book, some as objects of extended critique, others as crucial sources of logical method or interpretive direction.

12. Cf. Richard McKeon, ed., *The Basic Works of Aristotle* (New York, 1941), p. xxxvii.

13. "Aristotle says that 'an iron ball of one hundred pounds falling from a height of one hundred cubits reaches the ground before a one pound ball has fallen a single cubit.' " Cf. Crew-deSalvio translation, p. 64.

14. Moreover, " 'Simplicio' is an Aristotelian straw man who fares ill in the argument, and whose name recalls the faithful sixth-century commentator on the treatise *De Caelo*" (Cooper, p. 51).

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Stillman Drake whose efforts have made available to them in their own tongue almost all of Galileo's major works. Add to this the fact that Drake's devotion has enabled him to internalize the spirit of Galileo to an unprecedented degree, and we get a truly unique situation" (p. 237). These are the kindest words Finocchiaro has for any one except Galileo. Note the key phrase, "to internalize the spirit of Galileo." Contrast this to Schleiermacher's aphorism from 1805: "In interpretation it is essential that one be able to step out of one's own frame of mind into that of the author."[15] This is the first and simplest principle of classical hermeneutics — one that Schleiermacher stated and elaborated in scores of ways. It also constitues, along with a few rules for "reconstruction" (pp. 28-29), Finocchiaro's total canon of hermeneutical principles.

The key question here is this: if Finocchiaro can see that Drake owes his scholarly uniqueness to a form of fundamental sympathy with his subject, in the ability to "put himself both objectively and subjectively in the same position of the author,"[16] why can he not carry through the same struggle himself? Why must he acquiesce to Galileo's gross distortion, through Simplicio, of Aristotelian methodology of inquiry? As Cooper reminds us, then, "as later, but few estimates of the Greek writer steered fairly between the extremes of adulation and censure; even in our day few persons reckon aright with some inevitable limitations of Aristotle in his time, and manage to do justice to his extraordinary attainments" (p. 43). This becomes especially plausible when one reads a good translation of the contiguous passages from his works which Galileo apparently had in mind when he fabricated the Aristotelian falling bodies claim in *Two New Sciences*.[17] Though Aristotle is not by any means exculpated, this simple exercise — far simpler than dropping weights from a tower — shows how badly decontextualized Aristotle's notions were and that he was not the imbecile Galileo made him. Since Finocchiaro is constantly chastising interpreters of Galileo for erring in matters of context, it is uncharitable — in spite of his professed adherence to the "principle of Charity" (pp. 340-42) — to subject Aristotle to this same reductionism. If he can be conscientious enough to realize that "a systematic attempt to understand *every* methodological remark made therein" (p. 103), of which there are at least 229 (p. 414), is necessary to his task, why can a similar level of interpretive energy not be guided toward Galileo's opposition as well?

In short, special pleading is going on. And this ruins the chances for what could have been a true hermeneutic *tour de force,* i.e., figuring out what Galileo *believed* to be Aristotelian principles of inquiry (as well as the other systems then in opposition), and contrasting this to the actual oppositional texts — a true double hermeneutic. As it is, Finocchiaro remains a vigorous, if much more formally organized, version of Sagredo — Galileo's sergeant-at-arms in the battle against darkness. The alternative posture would have been of particular help in relieving Aristotle of the foolish charge of pure deductivism, empty of experimental-empirical content — a caricature Galileo did a great deal to propagate, but which is contradicted at every turn in the previouly mentioned texts. The change in the *type* of empirical study is what is intriguing, as it marks a drastic alteration in the structure of rationality. Though Finocchiaro hints throughout that this is one of his interests — to paint the mind behind the prose of the *Dialogue* — he does it obliquely and without attention to the necessary foil, a non-dogmatized opposition. Put another way, the hermeneutician must be *systematically* suspicious or trusting of all claims, as they deserve. Arbitrary suspension of either to

15. *Hermeneutics: the Handwritten Manuscripts, op.cit.*, p. 42.
16. *Ibid.*, p. 113.
17. Cf. *De Caelo* 4.2.309a27-b18 and *Physics* 4.8.2. 16a8-21, in Cooper, pp. 40-41.

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favor one side of an argument invalidates the whole procedure. The needs for Galileo's rhetoric — what Finocchiaro calls his appeal to "emotion, aesthetics, and persuasion" (Chapter 3) — may justify some of his "artistic" distortion of the Peripatetics. But this does not justify Galileo's interpreters falling for it.

Finocchiaro's divided heart[18] — one part hanging onto the needs of great logical rigor, the other attentive to the *Dialogue* as a work of (scientific) literature important in its own right — creates another major obstacle to appreciating his book.[19] Just as he early on points out the fallacy of categorically identifying each of the speakers with an ideological position (pp. 46ff.), and then proceeds through most of the book to treat Simplicio as a dope, he also forgets his own important insight, that "objective criticism" speaks "only" to intellect, rhetoric to "our whole being." Though it probably suits his colleagues "doing logic," the result of Finocchiaro's forgetting this primary fact of interpretation is that whole portions of his book become unreadable. These parts could be called "enumerating sequences," and become hostage to the reductionist demands of logical manipulation.[20] Recall the verb "compile," as in "compiling a book." It is in these enumerating sequences that sheer, dogged compilation gets a workout, and where the reader is set adrift.[21] The descriptions themselves are fairly tedious, lack any of Galileo's sparkle, are converted more or less into current jargon, and — the important item — correspond minimally with the texts they summarize. The rich complexity of the *Dialogue*, the wit and exuberant sense of discovery Galileo artfully built into it — he's been called a great prose stylist of the era — by necessity evaporate, leaving an indigestible husk.

There is an underlying naivete to all this busy compiling, i.e., Finocchiaro's conventional contemporary belief that "arguments" at their best must be reduced to

18. Finocchiaro hits a very important point when he asks, "Is there really no way of combining textual accuracy and scientific relevance? Should it not be possible to give an account of the *Dialogue* that keeps an eye both on the text and on concepts that are likely to be of interest to the working scientist?" (p. 79). His answer, a "reconstruction of the scientific content of the First Day" (pp. 79-87 — the *Dialogue* is divided into four days), is dull science and not hermeneutics. More than "an eye" to the text is called for. Again, inattention to hermeneutic theory takes its toll.

19. Finocchiaro tries to be both a literary critic and a formal analyst of arguments. The latter role he performs better because it corresponds more closely to his own training and temperament. But he can wax lyric as a student of prose for its own sake. In showing that the three speakers do not always behave in character, he refers to "the complexity of the book's dramatic structure" (p. 46); later he compliments the book's "aesthetic magic" (p. 54), points out a "very pleasing and clever aesthetic image" (p. 55), and that "the wit and sarcasm are memorable" (p. 56); moreover, "This is great wit, though incredibly subtle" (p. 60), and finally, "The persuasive force of this rhetorical criticism is much greater than the logical force of the objective counter-evidence also presented; whereas the objective criticism affects only our intellect, the rhetorical one affects our whole being" (p. 63). This is the only passage in the book revealing this sort of sentiment — which is a shame.

20. Included in these schematizations are the following: "Analytical Summary" of the entire book (pp. 32-45); "Scientific Content of the First Day" (pp. 79-87); "Methodological Topic" outline (pp. 105-141); "Frequency of Philosophical Discussion" table (p. 145); "Index of individual philosophic topics" (pp. 146-147); "Index of main philosophical topics" (pp. 147-148); and "Distribution of philosophical topics" (p. 149; "Index of individual logical topics" (pp. 414-415) and "Index of main logical topics" (pp. 415-416). The most important is the "Methodological Topic" outline, since Finocchiaro's central preoccupation, to render intelligible Galileo's method-as-rationality, depends upon it.

21. Thus, pp. 33-38 are about "Mathematical reasoning and number mysticism," pp. 38-57 on "Conceptual frameworks," pp. 57-59, "Sense experience," pp. 59-71, "Aristotle's authority as a logician," pp. 71-82 "The role of authority in natural philosophy," and so on through the entire book, reduced to 56 topics.

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one or another form of logical coding. At least a third of this long book is given to exactly that: the conversion, blow by blow, of Galileo's "arguments" — as clarified, ordered, deodorized, and updated — into analytical schemas. Since Finocchiaro dislikes conventional logic texts for paying no attention to real arguments, he believes he's done a great service to the logic industry — and maybe he has — by providing it with this data set. But what has he done to Galileo?

Had Finocchiaro thought about hermeneutics and the place of logic in it, he could not have expended the gargantuan energy it took to reduce Galileo into units amenable to formal manipulation. Finocchiaro himself repeatedly says that formal logic is deficient because it is removed from real life's thought. But in what seems a costly actualization of the homily "if you can't beat them, join them," he transforms a lively human document into an extraordinary moonscape of fragmentary notation.[22]

What is one to make of this exertion? Elsewhere in the book Finocchiaro excitedly proposes that a genuine "history of logical practice" could be built if people like himself took the time to disembowel "Euclid's *Elements,* Plato's *Dialogues,* Aquinas' *Summa Theologica,* Machiavelli's *Discourses,* Galileo's *Dialogue Concerning the Two Chief World Systems,* Hume's *Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion,* perhaps [!] Marx's *Capital*" (p. 224). The last named has undergone some tearing apart very much along Finocchiaro's lines, and it has not helped much in understanding Marx.

There is a terrible irony to Finocchiaro's monumental labors. His insistence (carried to a virtuosic extreme in Chapter 16, "Galileo as a Logician") upon the ultimate priority and superiority of deduction in human rationality over the aesthetic-rhetorical-irrational features of discourse (Feyerabend's universe) and his coordinated attempt to use a warm-blooded treatise like the *Dialogue* for demonstration purposes, have revealed the fruits of his own hermeneutic intentions to be essentially irrational. And all this in the interest of increased clarity! The historical importance of Galileo's writings (which was not much until some time after his death) lies in their persuasive power — which Finocchiaro knows — and not in their exquisite logical structure, which is probably perceived only subliminally. To fit the discussion that Galileo creates into structure diagrams and stunning deductions requires heavy-handed reductionism. And Finocchiaro refuses to recognize the cost this exacts. He sacrifices the attraction Galileo holds to the brutalizing atextuality of logic. Finocchiaro is a wizard at these games, but he shines at the expense of his patron. Galileo was too smart for that mistake.

Alan Sica

22. There is no way to demonstrate this phenomenon, this outbreak of *pathologia textualis,* except by offering a short example from Finocchiaro's chapter, "Galileo as a Logician." The selection in the Drake translation is from 136.14 to 138.12, which I will not reproduce here. It concerns a debate over a passage in *De Caelo* regarding Aristotle's ideas about the Earth's motion, i.e., its "necessary" two motions. Here is part of what Finocchiaro does with Galileo's counter-argument: "Now, (G2111212) if A121' is true, then if the earth were the *primum mobile* the first terrestrial rotation would not imply the second, since (G21112121) A121' means that one rotation implies a second if and only if the rotation does not belong to the *primum mobile*; but, (G2111211) if the earth rotates then *it* is the *primum mobile*, since (G21112111) to conceive the earth as having axial rotation is to conceive it as the *primum mobile*; therefore, G211121) if A121' is true, then if the earth rotates its first rotation does not imply a second terrestrial rotation; therefore, (G21112) if A121' is true, then the first terrestrial rotation would not imply a second one; but, (G21111) if A 12' follows from A121', then if A121' is true then the first terrestrial rotation would imply a second; therefore, (G2111) if A12' follows from A121', then A121' implies a contradiction; therefore. . ." (p. 381). It goes on like that for a while. (Here one turns to Hegel's *Science of Logic* for relief.)

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Edward P. Thompson. *The Poverty of Theory and Other Essays.* New York: Monthly Review Press. 404 pages.

The Poverty of Theory initiates Round Two of the Anderson-Thompson debate. The first stage, in the 1960s, articulated the differences between one of the founders of *New Left Review* and its current editor. In 1962, Anderson was selected to take over editorship of *New Left Review.* Within a year, the founders discovered that the new direction of the journal was incompatible with their intellectual and political approach. "Finding ourselves redundant," Thompson writes, "we submitted to dissolution" (p. 245). Written in 1965, "The Peculiarities of the English" was a response to the political tendencies of the "new new left" and Anderson's "Origins of the Present Crisis,"[1] which had redirected the review by denouncing the previous British-Marxist tradition and replacing it with a structuralist orientation. The second stage of the debate opens with "The Poverty of Theory" — an article first published in the book by the same title which criticizes Althusser's theory and politics.[2]

The first question is: "why is this belated attack so vituperative?" The essay is a challenge to the Althusserian influence on *New Left Review.* The issues raised in the first round dealt with the possibility and desirability of a totalizing structuralist history of British capitalism, and whether a structural or cultural class analysis of the workers' movement is more fruitful. These issues were not solved. "Peculiarities" demystified Anderson's introduction of a rigid theoretical model to correct "positivism, empiricism, and historicism" by showing that it falsified history and forced it into the particular Althusserian Marxist strait jacket. Anderson's "Origins of the Present Crisis" had sought to explain the mid-1960s crisis of working class politics in Britain, to introduce a theory to account for the development of British capitalism in the past three centuries, and to provide an example of the way to unite theory and practice by focusing on the state as the strategic domain for future political action. The implication was that only a structural analysis of the state could overcome the limits of a politically impotent reconstruction of the social and cultural history of class construction, by providing a revolutionary party with the necessary weapons to successfully lead the proletariat.

"The Peculiarities of the English" was a devastating critique of much of Anderson's essay. Thompson showed that the focus on the alleged aristocratic vanguard of the British ruling class as well as the scorn for the British bourgeoisie's "incomplete" revolution and the working class's reformism sorely miss the mark. As for the attempt to introduce a new theoretical schema to account for three hundred years of British history, Thompson asked whether borrowings from Sartre, Gramsci, and structuralist Marxism merely refurbished stultified categories or actually broaden historical comprehension. Thompson excels in explaining the *non-accidental* character of the ellisions and errors in Anderson's account. The empirical mistakes and omissions are directly related to the theoretical baggage imported by Anderson. Finally, far from rejecting the role and importance of theory in historical research, Thompson agreed that theory and history must inform each other and that the British working class needs theory "like no other." This theory, however, need not be derived solely from the

1. "Peculiarities of the English" originally appeared in *The Socialist Register,* 2 (1965). "Origins of the Present Crisis" originally appeared in *New Left Review,* 23 (1964). The "new new left" refers to an other, older "new left," i.e., the socialist humanist tradition of English ex-communists expressed in journals such as *The Reasoner* and *The New Reasoner* (pp. i-v).

2. *Arguments within English Marxism* (London, 1980) is Anderson's reply to *The Poverty of Theory.*

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Marxist tradition. Insisting that a Marxism unable to speak in the "British idiom" is useless, Thompson challenged the assumption that the British working class movement has been reformist and corporatist since the defeat of Chartism because it had succumbed to an "empiricist ideology" and an aristocratic ethos. On the contrary, he argued, the British labor movement had been informed by Marxist theory far more than by fabianism, and the trade union left has consistently been on the left of the Labor Party (pp. 281-286). Clearly, political issues are at work here. The opposed historical interpretations are connected with a political disagreement between a democratic socialist, concerned with the possibilities of spontaneous and autonomous activity stemming from a potentially radical working class culture, and an authoritarian neo-Leninist convinced of the corporatist (trade unionist) impulses of the British working class and advocating the usual solution.

Thompson identified four dogmas distorting Anderson's account: the base-superstructural model, the concept of revolution, the concept of class, and the imported categories. Although Anderson is no vulgar economic determinist, the sophisticated structural Marxist version of the base-superstructure model results in reductionist positions. Thus, the claim that the 17th-century English revolution was a successful capitalist revolution which, nevertheless, left almost the entire social structure intact, fits well with Anderson's thesis that British society is an amalgam of bourgeois and aristocratic institutions in which the aristocracy remains in control (p. 263). Such an analysis suppresses more than it clarifies. Anderson's analysis of empiricist-utilitarian bourgeois ideology in Britain leaves out nothing less than political economy, the importance of Protestant dissent and natural law, and the role of natural science (pp. 263, 267). How traditions are preserved, what carries them, why 'bourgeois' ideologies differ, are questions shunted aside by this model. Religion, morality, and politics are analyzed in terms of structural constraints and 'real interests' that they mystify (religion) or merely represent (politics). Thus, the English revolution was incomplete because it was fought in religious terms (p. 258). Political institutions such as the rule of law, rights, parliament, formal democracy, are viewed solely as structures of integration and class power.

The concept of revolution, which Anderson reproduced unchanged 15 years later,[3] similarly reduced political action to struggles for state power by classes and their representatives. It overlooks any fundamental changes that do not follow the model of economic crisis cum political revolution. Anderson considers any view of change that deviates from this model to be reformist.[4] It is the usual Leninist litany: the expropriation of expropriators must take place during an economic crisis through a struggle for state power that only a violent revolution could resolve. Thus, instead of confronting the fact that in the past radical transformations have generally not followed the model of the French or of the Russian revolution, Anderson implies that Thompson is a reformist.

It is not surprising that Thompson raises the most serious objections to Anderson's version of class analysis. Anderson applies the terms "bourgeoisie," "aristocracy," and "proletariat" to groups for over three centuries, thus ignoring both the changing social anatomy of these classes, and the changing structure of labor. Against this structuralist Marxism, the empiricist historian has to insist that the concept of class relations is a metaphoric description of complex patterns of historical development

3. *Ibid.*, pp. 59-100.

4. In fact, Thompson is chided for hoping that civil war, armed struggle, and the like might be avoided in a socialist transformation of capitalism. Needless to say, Anderson applies the same objection to his other political opponent, Eurocommunism.

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often happening *without volition* or *identity* (p. 279) and that classes do not exist as abstract categories but "only as men come to *act* in roles,... to feel themselves to *belong* to classes, to define their interests as between themselves and against other classes" (p. 261). The final point at issue in "Peculiarities," the introduction of selected categories from French and Italian Marxism, relates to Anderson's dogmatic use of the concept of class. Far from broadening historical comprehension, these imports serve only to reinforce Anderson's political bias.

The question of the adequacy of Marxism to historical analysis and the relation between theory and history broached during the first round of the debate remained unanswered. Now, nearly 15 years later, in "The Poverty of Theory," Thompson directly attacks Althusserianism and, indirectly, its English epigones: Anderson and *New Left Review*. Despite a well-articulated critique in the latter half of the essay, however, not much is added to what was already established during the first stage of the debate. "Peculiarities" left the impression that, were Thompson to continue his analysis, he would re-examine all Marxist categories used by Marxist historians in order to locate strengths and weaknesses of non-Althusserian Marxist historiography and elucidate the possible relations between theories other than Marxism and historical work. "The Poverty of Theory" fails on both counts. A passionated defense takes the place of a critique of Marxist historiography. There is no consideration of new techniques in social history,[5] but only an odd identification of history with British Marxist historiography and of theory with Marxism. But the discussion of the choice of Marxism as theory *par excellence* was already closed off in the "Open Letter to Leszek Kolakowski." To the query, "Why Marxism?" Thompson responded by identifying Marxism as a pluralist tradition to which one can still adhere despite the disastrous developments in the East and the threat of structuralist Marxist closures in the West (p. 327). It is Thompson's personal choice to remain continuous with his own past and within the idiom of British Marxist historiography. But Thompson's notion of tradition is arbitrary, and his theoretical reasons for remaining within Marxism are weak and tautological. Indeed, Thompson simply quotes Kolakowski's early position as reason enough to remain Marxist (p. 334).

To be sure, "The Poverty of Theory" acknowledges Kolakowski's charge regarding the vagueness of the "Marxist tradition." But Thompson's response that there is not one, but two Marxist traditions (authoritarian versus libertarian) is hardly sufficient (p. 188). The problem is that Thompson continues to identify Marxism as a set of concepts whose use in historical investigation he is unwilling to abandon and unable to examine critically. Thus, *The Poverty of Theory* does not progress beyond "Peculiarities."

What, then, does Thompson actually do in "The Poverty of Theory"? The essay has two parts: one a political and the other a theoretical critique of Althusserianism. To the historically uninformed devotees of Althusser, Thompson's analysis of the origins and political thrust of Althusserianism is truly a service. Its main elaboration in 1964 (*For Marx*) took the form of an apparently innocent scientific critique of Lukacs, Gramsci, the young Marx, and Hegel. Thompson asks — why at that time, and who was the real object of this critique? Since Althusser is a member of the French

5. History "from below" is not purely a Marxist enterprise, and it is practiced by other schools such as the *Annales* school in France and the Bielefeld school in West Germany. Cf. *Social Research*, 47:3 (Autumn 1980), special issue on "Theory and Social History." It is disturbing that Thompson does not address the issues raised by Althusser's most brilliant student, Foucault, regarding the nature of historical evidence, objects, and the discipline of history. Cf. Michel Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge* (New York, 1972).

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Communist Party it is not illegitimate to ask such questions. Anyone familiar with the history of Marxism and communist dissent should know that the four above-mentioned thinkers were the sources of the 'philosophy of praxis' and 'socialist humanism' that became the motto of the communist libertarian movement in 1956.[6] Althusser's critique of 'Stalinist deviations' as the 'bourgeois ideology' of socialist humanism that has crept into Stalinism is exposed by Thompson as a typical Stalinist trick — the identification of all opposition as objectively reactionary, bourgeois, or worse.

Socialist humanism, the intellectual expression of the anti-Stalinist revolt, is thus presented by Althusser simultaneously as the bourgeois ideology of the "openly rightist" wave that carried off communist intellectuals after the 20th Party Congress, *and* as the mask of Stalin himself (pp. 134-135). Moreover, Thompson argues, Althusser's own critique of Stalinism refers to errors, even crimes, but does not analyze Stalinism as a system of institutions and practices, since it presupposes that we are now in a post-Stalinist generation (p. 136). As Anderson points out, perhaps it is going too far to see Althusserianism as "Stalinism reduced to the paradigms of theory."[7] It remains, however, that Althusser's attack on socialist humanism was aimed at communist dissent.

Anderson's reply is a masterpiece of sophistry. In a chapter on Stalinism, there is no analysis of the phenomenon, but only a prolonged refutation of Thompson's assessment of Althusser. Anderson wants to set the record straight. At most, he clears Althusser "the man" from the exaggerated charge of being an unregenerate Stalinist apologist, by providing details about his career in the Communist Party and a few quotes from various texts criticizing the Soviet Union. Despite himself, Anderson reveals his and Althusser's true authoritarian colors when he explains the "real context' of Althusser's positions. This context was not the revolt of '56 and its aftermath, for this had already been contained. Rather, it was the Sino-Soviet split and the policy of peaceful coexistence between the U.S. and the Soviet Union. Against this constellation, Althusser unleashed his broadside attacking socialist humanism, the target being not communist dissenters but the international policy of the Soviet Union. Althusser's defense of China, Mao, the Cultural Revolution is offered as proof of his anti-Stalinism in spite of the fact that China justified its break with Russia because of revisionism against the heroic decades of revolutionary socialism under none other than...Stalin. Anderson grudgingly concedes that Althusser might be criticized for his 'midjudgment' of Mao's China and the Cultural Revolution, and that his anti-Stalinism was not as principled or as passionate as Thompson's. Yet, he also states that one of the costs of believing in Maoism as an alternative to Krushchevism was the Chinese Communist Party's pro-Stalinist line. So the defense of Maoism did after all mean a positive "take" on Stalinism. It is unclear how this description of the "context" absolves rather than damns Althusser. What, after all, was so horrible about Krushchevism at the time, compared with what preceded it and compared with the Chinese response?

But things get worse. Anderson argues that Althusser's choice to remain in the French Communist Party is justified by the fact that the party tolerates him, and concludes that "Today there is probably more genuine liberty of discussion in the PCF than in the drugged consensus of the PCI."[8] Anderson's hatred of Eurocommunism,

6. *The New Reasoner* was thus subtitled, "A Quarterly Journal of Socialist Humanism." Cf. *Poverty, op.cit.*, p. 129.
7. Anderson, *Arguments, op.cit.*, pp. 103-104.
8. *Ibid.*, p. 114.

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not because it is still Leninist but because it is not Leninist enough; his acceptance of Mandel's criticism of Eurocommunism as simultaneously Stalinist and bourgeois reformist, speaks for itself.

But things get much much worse. In order to vindicate Althusser's attack on socialist humanism dissidents (they were, after all, the target!), Anderson argues that what Althusser feared was the "real danger" of a rightist turn in the early 1960s. The dishonesty here is overwhelming. Wanting to appear fair, Anderson criticizes Althusser for ascribing an ideological fatality to socialist humanism. But the thrust of the rest of the chapter turns out to be, in a roundabout manner, precisely this fatality. Anderson points to the reception of socialist humanism by priests (Calvez, Bigo), lay thinkers (Fromm), academics (Avinieri, Tucker), and Kolakowski. He also mentions the capitulation of major political figures associated with the '56 rebellion to social democracy (Grolitti) or right-wing politics (Hervé to Gaullism) as proof — of what? Is this supposed to be guilt by association? As if this were not bad enough, Anderson then proceeds to charge that unlike Trotsky's "unsurpassed" (!) materialist critique of Stalinism, the "levy" of '56 has produced amazingly few and meager results. Why? Because of moralism — Anderson's familiar ogre. "The prolonged silence on the Soviet Union or China which followed the effervescence of '56-59 was perhaps in this sense the logical outcome of what might genuinely be called a substitution of moralism for historical materialism."[9] So there is a fatality after all.

But why is Anderson talking about the levy of '56 when the issue is Althusser's attack on socialist humanism? What does this alleged failure of productivity imply? Either he is making the meaningless accusation that in the years of extreme repression after '56 the participants were unproductive (in Poland, where there was no repression after '56, they were productive!), or he is maintaining that the moralism of a doctrine precluded, in all but a few cases, the possibility of a thorough-going critique of Stalinism. The "few" are Bahro and Medvedev — both continuous with the tradition of socialist humanism and both are acceptable to Anderson only because they are Leninists. But what about the works of others from that tradition — Markus, Heller, Feher, Hegedüs, Szelenyi, Konrad, Rakovski, etc., in Hungary; Brus, Modzelewski and Kuron in Poland; Stojanovic, Supek, Horvath and others in Yugoslavia, etc.? Moreover, why is it that Anderson, so politically conscious, does not recognize that in the 1950s, for those who hoped to see the system reformed (they have long since abandoned this hope), socialist humanism was the project of social theory as practical critique of Diamat? Finally, how is it that he neglects to refer to the numerous socialist humanists who have remained anti-authoritarian Marxists, both within the Eastern bloc and in exile? All the subtlety of the chapter on "Stalinism" does not succeed in concealing Anderson's political position — it is stated clearly: "The drift of the declaration that there are 'no enemies to the right' of Stalinism (Thompson) within the labor movement is acceptance of social democracy as the lesser evil."[10] Indeed! The drift of Anderson's entire chapter, his Trotskyism notwithstanding (or perhaps because of it), is to opt for Stalinism and the Soviet Union over 'bourgeois' liberal democracy or social democracy as the preferable, more progressive social system!

What about the theoretical issues raised in "The Poverty of Theory"? Unfortunately, they are not handled nearly as well as the political analysis. The debate with Althusser all too often takes the form of a rather sterile inter-Marxist battle over who gets to inherit historical materialism — the structuralists or the Marxian historians. The issues often get buried in this morass and, when Thompson is right, it

9. *Ibid.*, p. 120.
10. *Ibid.*, p. 123.

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is often for the wrong reasons (as is the case with Althusser). On the other hand, despite the far more temperate style of his reply, and the greater care with theory, Anderson's response rebuffs many of Thompson's positions without vindicating either his own or Althusser's.

Thompson's essay focuses on the relation between structure (theory) and process (history), the definition and battle over historical materialism, and the problem of human agency (i.e., the relation between system and class categories). Thompson criticizes the Althusserian system for fetishizing the categories of the critique of political economy (with a few additions of his own) into a closed self-sufficient system which predetermines the roles, types of conflicts, contradictions and interests of its agents and hovers between an agnostic and omnipotent attitude toward knowledge of history (p. 22). Against this tendency, Thompson protects "process," historical inquiry and subjectivity, by insisting that system categories are really only metaphors which must be relativized *vis-à-vis* the primacy of the historical process. The justified objections to the fundamental ambiguity of structuralism regarding the status of the structures it theoretically constitutes leads Thompson to the opposite extreme: nominalism, realism (pp. 18, 40), and an unjustified insistence on the unity of history understood simply as "the past." As Anderson correctly points out, Thompson defends the dignity of history as a discipline by stressing the importance of unearthing historical evidence through an interrogation of the sources without, however, critically examining what evidence, sources or historical objects are.

That the Althusserian system has no category for experience, that it precludes a "dialogue" between empirical evidence and theory, process and structure, that it confuses empirical investigation with empiricism, and that its structural analysis is static and unable to account for social movements, values and culture, are all accurate accusations. Anderson even admits that Althusser's system wrongly assimilates knowledge to science *tout court*. However, it is through his confrontation with Althusser's failed attempt to deal with social structure and its effects without recourse to essentialism, hypostatized subjectivity, or teleology that Thompson became aware of and tackled the problem of the relation between structure and process. His effort to return process to history, to reopen the artificially closed field of the social system, and to rescue diachrony from its residual status as unstructured narrative, misfire due to a curious mixture of Marxist dogmatism and an anti-theoretical bias.[11] Once again, the relation of structure and process is defined as the *same* problem as that between social being and social consciousness (p. 17). And what a surprise, the "juncture concepts" that will, for Thompson, solve the problem by linking system, social consciousness and theory with process, social being and history, turn out to be "class," "need," and "human experience" (pp. 163-164). Thompson seems to think that if one replaces the laws of motion of the capitalist system with the logic of process, determinism with the setting of limits, in short, if one substitutes provisional historical terms for rigid theoretical categories, the problem is solved (p. 110). It was easy for Anderson to make short shrift of Thompson's resolution to the relation of structure and process. Again, however, his concern is not to engage in serious discussion, but to defend Althusser.

Althusser's claim in *Reading Capital* to supply Marxist historians with the "missing" theory of historical materialism is well-known. The annoyance of historians who have been working for decades within a Marxist tradition is also understandable (p. 14). To his credit, Thompson does not simply complain, but undertakes a penetrating critique of the attempt to reconstruct a theory of historical materialism in terms of the critique

11. This bias is exhibited throughout the book. An example is the gratuitous attack on Dick Howard, *The Marxian Legacy* (p. 204).

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of political economy. It is here that Thompson begins, tentatively, to step out of the Marxian framework by criticizing Marx's own economism. He points out the fundamental ambiguity in *Capital* between a new critical political economy operating within the universe prescribed by the object it immanently unfolds (capitalist relations of production) and a defetishizing critique of political economy geared toward articulating the social character of struggles that are obscured by capitalist economic forms.[12] Thompson sides with the latter project to challenge the imposition of an economic structure on the working class that reduces workers to supports of the logic and necessities of capitalist reproduction. In an effort to get beyond Marx, he tries to establish the limits of both political economy *and* of its critique. He argues that despite the tendency of capitalist logic to penetrate all spheres of existence, the logic of non-economic activities cannot be grasped from the standpoint of political economy or a structuralist version of historical materialism. He accuses Marx of having moved across the invisible conceptual line from capital (an abstraction of political economy which is his proper concern) to capitalism, or the whole society conceived as an organic system. "But the whole society comprises many activities and relations (of power, of consciousness, sexual, cultural, normative) which are not the concern of political economy, which have been *defined out* of political economy, and for which it has no terms" (p. 62). Where Thompson fails, however, is not in his critique of the new historical materialism, but in his defense of the old. His emphasis on desire, experience, morality, culture, does not lead him to question the overall Marxian framework but only to defend the romantic anti-capitalist elements within it against the exaggerated rationalistic bias of structuralist Marxism.[13]

Instead of quibbling with Althusser over proprietorship of historical materialism, it would have been better had Thompson examined the philosophy of history presupposed by this theory. In short, he should have looked more carefully at other approaches. The only concept seriously examined is, once again, "class." The charge against Althusserianism is well-known: in the process of exorcising the ogres of essentialism, humanism, historicism and universal subjectivity, he throws out the baby with the bath water (p. 122). Against this "history without a subject," Thompson holds up the self-constituting experience of the British working class and calls for "history as unmastered human practice" (p. 103). In short, he tries to return human agency (the role of volition, values, action) to history through emphasizing spontaneous working class culture and praxis.

Anderson readily unveils the fallacy of this appeal to experience to solve the problem of human agency in history. What guarantees are there that the lessons taught by experience will be the right ones? Thompson's agency is 'existential' in range, focusing on choice, values and decisions, without specifying the level on which goal setting or value positing takes place. But the real problem, however, is the arbitrary link of agency with class. The conflict in the first stage of the debate between a historical-cultural versus structuralist class analysis returns. For Thompson, consciousness, culture and self-constitution are the key. Anderson's structuralist class analysis, on the other hand, emphasizes the relation to the means of production and systematic contradictions rather than class struggle as the motor of social change. It is the old story of voluntarism versus determinism all over again.[14]

12. Cf. Jean Cohen, "System and Class: The Subversion of Emancipation," *Social Research* 45:4 (Winter 1978), pp. 789-843.

13. Because Marxism has always had a communitarian, romantic side, it was possible for Thompson to turn to English romanticism (Blake) and populism without stepping beyond Marxism.

14. The flaws of each approach are clear. The cultural class analysis underestimates the role

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Politics, rather than intellectual weaknesses, are at work here. Anderson does not want to abandon the politics flowing from the structural Marxist class analysis — although he is less open about the connection between the two than Thompson. It is not surprising that he insists on class and class struggle following the systemic logic of the capitalist-imposed division of labor, capitalist socialization, and the split between the economy, society and the state. For the logical political consequence (drawn long ago by Lenin) of such a theory is the need for a political party armed with the fruits of Marxist science to guide the class from its corporatism to political action and hegemony. Thompson, on the other hand, remains committed to a purely working class politics based on autonomous self-constitutive activity and democratic political action. Thus he must stress working class culture as *the source* of challenge to the logic of capitalism. He cannot see class conflict as part of the logic of capitalist reproduction since this threatens the image of the working class as the vital source of an alternative culture, a different kind of knowledge, and society.[15] This explains the anti-intellectual tone of his attack on Althusser and the shrillness of his complaints that all knowledge is not the result of scientific systems, that culture is not the exclusive province of an intellectual elite, etc. While his vision is less authoritarian and therefore more attractive, it is deceptively open-minded. For Thompson, too, has a totalizing vision operating not from the standpoint of a system, but of a social class. His non-reductive attitude to extra-economic spheres is geared primarily to the investigation of their contributions to working class culture, since only this class is the real repository of anti-capitalist values, knowledge and motivations.

The two approaches could perhaps be reconciled by considering both structural contradictions and class struggle as the logic and radical potential in one domain: that of socio-economic relations of production and circulation. In other words, the claim for the continued radical and democratic potential of working class movements would not be exaggerated if considered as one among many sources of alternatives to the existing system. As Thompson himself has pointed out, the logic of capitalist reproduction is not identical with the total social system. What is striking about *both* sides of this inter-Marxist debate is that neither questions the implications of the changed structural relations in late capitalist societies — the altered interconnection between state and civil society, the emergence of new social strata, the enormous importance of education, the university and professionalization for contemporary social movements. The first expression of these developments in the 1960s are defended or attacked, but not examined. This is no accident, for neither the "structuralist" nor the "cultural" class analysis can address non-class social movements and non-capitalist structural developments. And these are the limits of the whole debate. Instead of confronting developments in the social sciences, e.g., technocratic, meritocratic, or pluralist theories of the state and post-industrial society theories regarding the economy, class, new social strata, and new social movements, the debate remains within the confines of the territory mapped out by Marx over a century ago. In this regard, even the new stage of debate within British Marxism is dated. If there is anything to be learned from it, it is that we must move on.

Jean L. Cohen

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of the capitalist system in setting out limits and constraints to class action. The structuralist Marxist class analysis ontologizes the structural mechanism of capital (forces-relations clash) as the law of history and reduces class and class struggle to the byproduct of structures.

15. Of course, Thompson has gone way beyond this position in his current political involvement in the anti-nuclear movement. These criticisms are not aimed at the man, but at the theory.

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Fritz K. Ringer. *Education and Society in Modern Europe.* Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1979.

It is remarkable that nearly all progressive movements, especially socialist ones, have been fueled by a demand for education: to an astonishing but largely unstudied degree, activists from all sorts of oppressed groups have devoted themselves to mental self-improvement, and made large sacrifices to provide their children with educational opportunities which they themselves never had.

Different sectors within progressive movements may have seen this demand for education from different viewpoints, depending largely on their own educational achievements; but the assumption that education is essential to any future worth fighting for has been accepted unanimously and without any discussion. The literary ambitions of skilled Parisian artisans in the 1830s and 1840s,[1] for instance, seem to have been one of the main motives of militancy in 1848. But this was also a time of high unemployment among new graduates: educated young men were constantly being jolted by the discovery that there was no room for them in the prestigious professional careers that they had expected to lie open to their talents. A romanticized and proletarianized fantasy figure of the spontaneous left-wing revolutionary intellectual working man was framed in the minds of these so-called academic proletarians, and was given the responsibility of transforming society from below: making it, a cynic might say, a world fit for intellectuals.

So progressive intellectuals were able to envision a socialist power base outside their own educationally privileged circle, but comfortingly recognizable nonetheless. One such was 25-year-old Karl Marx, attracted (as he wrote soon after his arrival in Paris in 1843) by the vision of a revolt led not by those with money and education, but by the penniless proletarians — outcasts whose only vested interest was in the improvement of humanity as such, regardless of class and status. But, Marx added rather incongruously, the proletarians' revolution would necessarily involve the resurrection of that holy of holies of university education — philosophy: "Just as philosophy finds its material weapons in the proletariat, so the proletariat finds its spiritual weapons in philosophy."[2]

In these and similar ways, progressive movements have typically been alliances between the self-educating poor and those burdened with educational privilege; and they have constantly run into problems that they have diagnosed in terms of the relations between "workers" and "intellectuals." The causes of the predicament, and of the standard diagnosis, are not hard to find. As schooling systems have developed since the early 19th century, they have produced educated misfits who identify themselves with the demands of learning, culture, literature, science or philosophy, and who affirm themselves by ridiculing the commercial and industrial bourgeois and petty bourgeois — the Philistines, as Matthew Arnold called them. At the same time, workers in capitalist enterprises have resented both their exclusion from ownership and control of the goods they produce, and their inability to enjoy the cultural advantages of literary and scientific education. So the bourgeoisie has been constituted as a common enemy for intellectual dissidents and worker militants, even if they have hated it for partly divergent reasons.

Within such progressive anti-bourgeois alliances, the desirability of something called education has naturally been taken for granted. It has had an unquestioned place of honor in every socialist program, and socialists' efforts have no where been

1. Cf. Jacques Rancière's inspiring *La Nuit des Prolétaires* (Paris, 1981).
2. Cf. "Introduction" to *A Contribution to the Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right.*

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more successful than in campaigns all over the world for the provision and extension of free, comprehensive and compulsory schooling. But there has been no analysis of why the life of the student, teacher or independent intellectual should command respect and even veneration on the left. For decades, intellectuals have been trying to explain how the attributes of workers (whether courage or conformism) are induced by poor housing, massified culture and de-skilled labor processes. They have been less articulate about how their own points of view may be determined by the pursuit of literary and academic careers furnished with exams, competitions, lectures, lessons, rejection slips, manuscripts and student essays. Perhaps the question lies uncomfortably close to home.[3]

An isolated and splendid exception is Fritz Ringer's study of German intellectuals in *The Decline of the German Mandarins: The German Academic Community 1890-1933*, which came out in 1969. A young American academic who had left his native Germany as a child before the war, Ringer began this excellently conceived book by sketching the ideal type of the German mandarin — the doctor, lawyer, civil servant or teacher who prided himself on his university education and saw himself as part of a cultural elite with nothing in common with the bourgeoisie. Ringer went on to explore the conditions under which this mandarinate could function as a ruling class, the nature of its revulsion to mass culture, and its complex relations to the origins of Nazism. As a description of the social attitudes and effects of intellectuals as a group, *The Decline of the German Mandarins* could hardly be improved.

Still, it was open to the criticism — to which the works of intellectual historians are so often subjected — that it was only an impressionistic narrative, short of explanatory hypotheses on the one hand, and of numerical precision on the other. Ringer evidently took this criticism to heart, and for ten years or so he gave up the pleasant haunts of the intellectual historian and went off in search of educational statistics instead. The result is *Education and Society in Modern Europe*, an ambitious comparative statistical survey of the secondary and tertiary educational systems of France and Germany between 1800 and 1960 (with quick glimpses of England and America) and an attempt to formulate some generalizations and explanations.

What Ringer offers in this well-written book is about as appetizing as statistics can be. He has worked the figures round to produce measures of three extremely important aspects of educational institutions: first, their inclusiveness, i.e., the proportion of the population or age-group which they recruit; second, their progressiveness, or the chance of lower-class individuals receiving an education compared with that of their social superiors; and third, their segmentation, or the extent to which they provide separate curricular tracks for people with different social origins or destinies.

To select (and simplify) just one of Ringer's results: in the 1870s, about one half percent of the age group was in university-level education both in France and Germany. In both countries, the proportion grew threefold until the first World War, and continued to increase thereafter. German enrollments were slashed by the Nazis, and by World War II were no higher than they had been before the first war, while they were twice that in France. After World War II, enrollments increased in both countries, but in 1960 stood at almost 10 percent in France compared with little over 5 percent in Germany. In Great Britain, the proportion was about the same as in France; and in the United States, it was almost twice as high (pp. 291-292, 335, 229,

3. See Thomas L. Haskell, "Are Professors Professional?" in *Journal of Social History*, 14:3 (1981), and Régis Debray's shamelessly epigrammatic *Le Pouvoir Intellectuel en France* (Paris, 1979), now translated as *Teachers, Writers, Celebrities* (London, 1981).

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252). But, and this is where Ringer's distinction between progressiveness and inclusiveness comes into its own, it would be wrong to conclude that higher education was twice as democratic in France and England as in Germany, or twice as democratic again in the U.S., since in fact the upper class predominance within the student population was almost as marked in France, Britain and the U.S. as it was in Germany (p. 201) — which suggests that the expansion of non-compulsory education is really the extension of opportunities for the privileged, and is certainly not automatically meritocratic or egalitarian in its effects (p. 190).

Ringer's figures also describe the varying extent to which academic and professional families are self-perpetuating, in terms of the proportion of higher education students with professional or academic fathers. At the beginning of the 19th century, for instance, 55 percent of German university students were children of the small educated elite. This proportion declined to roughly 20 percent by the century's end (p. 104, but cf. also p. 83); but it had climbed back to 29 percent by 1963 — no doubt as a result of the admission of women, and especially of members of the group so insistently singled out by Virginia Woolf: "the daughters of educated men."

In spite of the interest of Ringer's figures, admirers of his earlier book are bound to be disappointed by the large gaps in them, and especially by their stubborn silence about educated men, as distinct from their children: they do not tell us the size and composition of teaching bodies, still less of different intelligentsias or mandarinates. Also, more technically, Ringer has been unable to avoid a rather disabling arbitrariness in compiling some of his results. The line he draws between secondary and tertiary education is a case in point. In 19th century France, the main function of the nationalized university was to administer and validate a bachelor's degree — or baccalaureate — for which students were trained in various colleges and lyceums. These institutes, which catered for students between twelve and twenty, are naturally classified as secondary. On the other hand, a bachelor's degree of a rather lower academic standard was administered by the universities of Oxford and Cambridge to students of much the same age after they had completed three or four years at one of the colleges in those towns. These students are naturally classed as tertiary or university level. Nevertheless, the English undergraduates evidently had much in common with the French *Lycéens*.

Headcounts that abstract from such national differences in order to make international comparisons obviously have to be used with caution. Again, law students in France are in universities, and so count in Ringer's higher education enrollment figures; but students in England's non-university system of legal education do not show up at all. And then, students in French law faculties might well be graduates from other higher education institutions, and in that case they would show up in the figures twice. Here as often elsewhere it is impossible for the educational statistician to ensure against counting individuals who enroll twice as two people. There is no getting round such difficulties as these (to which Ringer is extremely sensitive, in any case). They do not invalidate the statistical comparisons, but they do warn us not to expect any very clear or simple enlightenment from them.

These disappointments have obviously been felt by Ringer himself. He notes, for instance, that statistics "seem most comfortable in a purely negative role" and he wonders whether "perhaps statistics are constitutionally evasive" (p. 30). And he confesses that he is by nature an intellectual historian (p. 2), concerned with "social meanings," rather than a historical statistician. "The reader has been warned," he adds with a funny mixture of defiance and dismay (p. 205).

The book expresses another disappointment, too. Between the lines, it is easy to

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read Ringer's commitment to progressive ideals of education — a democratic, free and inclusive system, nurturing talent wherever it is found, and destroying the barricades of snobbery that so conspicuously hemmed in the old-fashioned literary elites. When he gives a final valedictory survey of his results, he draws attention to the fact that "wider access has led to no really satisfying improvements in the social distribution of educational opportunities," and when he records "widespread disillusionment with education as a means of democratization" (p. 262), he is evidently mourning the disappointment of hopes in which he himself shared. The assumption that education and social improvement go hand in hand is clearly coming under strain.

Optimism about education and progress keeps bogging down in the field; but perhaps one may still hope that illusions lost will become insights gained. And Ringer's results have suggested to him a theory, or even an explanation, of the behavior of education systems. The negative side of his thesis is that education cannot be seen as "a strictly dependent variable in the social process" (p. 13) — that it has as much to do with tradition and status or social honor as with economic class (p. 14). In particular — and Ringer's figures (like those of other researchers such as Lawrence Stone) seem to prove the point: educational systems have "a notable degree of independence from 'the economy' " (p. 4). The statistics, especially about national differences, do nothing to bear out the idea of education as subserving some independent "technological necessity" or "professionalization process" either (pp. 4, 6). So far so good.

The positive side of Ringer's thesis is that education is to be understood in its own terms, as "at least partly an autonomous element in the total society" (pp. 1-2l). Educational systems are thus, according to Ringer, "true systems" with laws of motion of their own: "faced with the apparent disappearance of certain curricular or groups of pupils after some new piece of legislation, the careful historian is bound to rediscover them under another name or in a neighboring compartment, within a nearly unchanged overall structure" (p. 1). Ringer fills this out by suggesting that a normal national education system in modern Europe will have developed through three stages. In the early industrial phase, beginning in the 18th century, the proportion of the population at school or in university declined or stagnated, and "there was a clear conflict between the traditional academic culture — that of the pre-industrial elites — and the emerging business civilization." In the second, or high-industrial phase, enrollments per population grew steadily, but mostly within low prestige sectors with a modern curriculum. In the third, late industrial phase, which began about 1930 and continues today, unprecedented increases in student numbers have reduced the status value of being educated, while the gulf between traditional and modern curricula has shrunk, and there has been an increasing, though still largely incomplete, "adjustment of educational systems to the requirements of the late industrial era" (p. 4).

In spite of its originality in emphasizing the autonomy of educational systems, this picture conforms to many of the basic prejudices of modern sociology (and to some of those of Foucaultianism, too): historically, it is drastically foreshortened, regarding the millenia of human history before the 19th century as merely pre-modern, and presenting the subsequent epoch in terms of modernization, which in turn is viewed largely as an effect of industrialization seen as a process which has dragooned the uncoordinated medley of past traditions into centralized, supervised, convergent national social units largely subservient to the requirements of industry or the state or pure pervasive power. Moreover, it sees these processes as almost totally disconnected from conscious control, particularly by statesmen, politicians, or pressure groups and organized social movements. It is as though the development of the industrial system

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(and perhaps of the education system) occurred automatically, intimating its requirements to the whole social system without having to pass through an error-prone area of human decision.

Thus Ringer is to be found lamenting Nazi educational policy not just for the obvious reasons, but also because it interfered with the natural development of the German system when it should have been growing out of its high industrial phase. "Unfortunately," he writes, "there is some difficulty in the dating of the late industrial phase, and it stems entirely from the intervention of the National Socialists." Enrollments were deliberately cut, and so, as Ringer puts it, "in this area at least, the National Socialists did manage to turn the clock back to 1911." But this is a curious and perhaps symptomatic way of reporting the Nazi education cuts, since it presupposes that elsewhere educational systems were growing and developing without any human intervention at all: and in particular it completely discounts the effects of determined left-wing campaigns for the extension of educational opportunity. If Nazi politicians were "setting the clock back," does this mean that the clock would otherwise have kept good time of its own volition? And what is it, after all, that made it start ticking in the first place, some 200 years ago? And, indeed, how do we ever tell whether the educational clock is running fast or slow, or even forward or backward? Where is the Greenwich of educational mean time?

The answer to such questions seems to lie in the statistics. The idea of national educational systems growing in some common pattern (as long as they are not meddled with by politicians) is well supported by enrollment statistics, as Ringer amply shows. So, the next question is: what do these statistics represent?

The word statistics goes back to the 18th century, when it meant the study of people from the viewpoint of the state. And as far as education is concerned, this antiquated statist connotation is still quite appropriate: with a small number of exceptions, educational statistics are what you find in government reports and yearbooks. It is understandable, therefore, that Ringer should have concentrated on France and Germany (Prussia), especially for the 19th century: these were the two countries where central government took the most active interest in education, with a view to organizing it for the good of the national culture as seen from behind office desks in Paris or Berlin. And if their figures seem to prove that education was developing as a "true system," a relatively independent organism without any visible means of support, then this may have as much to do with the centralized governmental viewpoint from which they were compiled as with any intrinsic property of educational arrangements as such. It is one thing for the government to take cognizance and control of an enlarged range of pre-existing educational activities, and it is quite another for educational opportunity to grow in reality. But as far as educational statistics are concerned, the effects would be identical, and would naturally be reported as an expansion of the educational system. The statistics, in other words, tell us about the activities in which governments have taken an interest, rather than about the far broader array of educational activities as a whole — which one might define as any attempts to satisfy needs or desires for knowledge or wisdom. They tell us, in effect, about educational value rather than educational use-value.

Ringer recognizes the difference from time to time (p. 116); and it must be what led him to exclude primary education from his comparative profiles of education systems. For in the first ten years of life, it is very conspicuously hard to say where ordinary existence ends and education begins. Primary education usually takes place in or near home, under the control of women, and consists in large part of instruction in the vernacular (the "mother tongue"). There is no natural boundary between children

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learning by overhearing conversations in the kitchen, by memorizing the lullabies sung over their cots, and by internalizing mnemonic chants at school and perhaps proudly reciting them when they get back home. But the problem is not confined to the primary sector. Quite sophisticated academic education, even in dead languages, has sometimes occurred within upper class families, especially among daughters and sisters of men with formal education; but it will never show up in the educational statistics. Unofficial education and self-education can also be conducted among working adults: at night, at weekends, in tea breaks or even during work, not to mention in periods of slackness or unemployment. And in the past it has often been conducted by trade unions or socialist organizations, sometimes in deliberate opposition to state-recognized educational work. These activities, too, will never show up in any educational statistics. And, finally, there are those who are imbued with an interest, or even obsession, about educational attainments which they have no chance of achieving themselves: individuals like Hardy's Jude Fawley, or Tressel's Frank Owen or, in a different way, like Eliot's Dorothea Brooke, still live in fiction, but their real prototypes are inaccessible to historians, and quite dead to educational statisticians.

The partial autonomy of educational systems recognized by statisticians may therefore be largely fictitious — a projection of the distortions of data gathering rather than a reflection of real changes in the cultivation and transmission of knowledge (apart from changes due to the state's interest). However, the autonomy may exist nevertheless as a property of education in the wider sense, that is to say of all attempts to minister to the need for (maybe useless) knowledge — a need that is culturally so universal that some might be tempted to call it instinctive. For if, as seems to be the case, arrangements for improving one's own cultural acquisitions and passing them on to younger generations are carried on even under the most cruel and discouraging conditions of persecution, overwork or unemployment, this may indeed be the result of a spontaneous human defensiveness, scarcely less fundamental than struggles against hunger, sadness or pain. And in that case, education in the narrower sense (as recorded in statistics since the dawn of modernization) must be at best subordinate to this more universal and more autonomous need. And if the officially recognized institutions really do form a system, it is because they have been subjected to deliberate systematization, usually propelled by progressive politicians devoted to state encouragement of the extension of educational opportunity, but often resisted by its intended beneficiaries, in whose experience the extension of state education might appear as the obliteration of their own intellectual values and of the culture of proletarian working men in particular.

It is from these past conflicts about the organization of mass education that we inherit not only the institutions in which most of us work, but also the confused common sense in which we try to think about such categories as workers, intellectuals, education and progress. Ringer's ambitious study, instructive even when disappointing, points to the heart of the matter: the difference between education as something which people rightly want because it is a means to knowledge and to intellectual, literary or artistic pleasure, and education as a set of relations of gender, age, status and class, organized or trapped in the durable public institutions of formal schooling. The naive progressive alliances that took it for granted that education and progress went hand in hand ignored this difference, and so were quite unprepared for the possibility that the two kinds of education might not cooperate but conflict. The time has come, certainly, to stop accepting the statisticians' opinions about what to count as education.

Jonathan Rée

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George Friedman. *The Political Philosophy of the Frankfurt School.* Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1981. 312 pages.

On the inside jacket of his book George Friedman is identified as an assistant professor of political science at Dickinson College who received his Ph.D. from Cornell. That exhausts my knowledge of the author. From the contents of his book, however, I would infer that the courses he offers deviate from the usual political science fare of model building and conceptual games; that they speak to genuine issues of Marxism and modern society: the crises of social systems, the madness of reason, the import of religious and utopian visions, and so on. I would even hazard that he is a stimulating teacher, and probably a fine fellow. For these reasons alone, if Professor Friedman has published this book in order to secure a job and tenure, I believe he deserves them.

If this book can be extricated from an ugly web of academic politics and careers to be judged on its own, then a different judgment can be offered: the book is awful. If only Cornell University Press expended as much effort on the text as it did on the typography and binding, which are excellent, we would all be happier. The scholarship is inferior, the arguments are a swamp, and the writing induces pain. This is another academic book which no one will read to the end without a special grant. It is the kind of book that after 10 pages or so you begin to wonder what is the meaning of life or, at least, what is the Haagen Dazs situation in the freezer.

Friedman did not want to write an intellectual history but a "systematic treatment of the thought of the Frankfurt School," or, more precisely, an "exegesis" of its texts on political theory. For this purpose he confines the Frankfurt School to Horkheimer, Adorno, Marcuse and Benjamin. Within these boundaries he might have utilized their earlier works which have been published in recent years; they might illuminate the mature political texts. A vain hope. Friedman sticks to the basic and familiar books, *Negative Dialectics, Eclipse of Reason, One-Dimensional Man,* and so on. Moreover, not only is history extraneous to his enterprise, it does not exist. He handles the texts as if they were all written at the same time, which often renders his arguments absurd. For instance, it is impossible to discuss "the" Frankfurt School's relationship to the proletariat by citing with equal ease Benjamin's "Theses on the Philosophy of History" and Marcuse's *Essay on Liberation,* as if several decades do not separate them.

The weakness of his scholarship is not restricted to his use of Frankfurt School texts. In all the areas he tackles — Hegel, Marx, Nietzsche — Friedman is over his head. To be sure, it is often not clear whether Friedman simply does not know what he is gabbing about, cannot write or cannot think; knowledge, style and logic form a seamless unity. It is clear that he does not stray far from the Standard Dictionary of Humanist Schlock. He employs often not only the basic terms, "crises of modernity," but leafs through finding crises of death, existence, redemption, history, and so on. Even his casual phrases betray the scantiest of knowledge; he regularly refers to the Marxism of "Stalin and Blum," as if it designated something. Why poor Léon Blum gets elevated to a co-determinant of Marxism is not explained.

Each chapter evidences Friedman's historical naivete, fractured language and synthetic emotionalism; because the book is conceptually dead Friedman tries to breathe life into it with contrived drama. The Frankfurt School is always agonizing over something. To illustrate: one chapter analyzes the Frankfurt School's relationship to Hegel and Hegelianism. The issue for the Frankfurt School was "whether there existed a way out of the historical cul-de-sac of the 20th century. To one such as Hegel, the existence of a cul-de-sac, particularly one with no exit, was

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literally unthinkable. Men who could think such thoughts were not Hegelians." To Friedman, cul-de-sacs with exits are quite reasonable, which makes him a Hegelian. Throwing on the scale the Frankfurt School's radicalism and critique of Hegel, Friedman concludes that "contrary to popular opinion, the Frankfurt School is not Hegelian, except as we are all Hegelians."

Perhaps they were Young Hegelians? Friedman raises "an issue with which both the Young Hegelians and the Frankfurt School were obsessed, but which the Frankfurt School radicalized: the issue of the death of God." The drums roll: "The issue was one that each of the members of the Frankfurt School knew of and agonized over. Each faced the problem as if it were the critical moment of contemporary existence. Each sought somehow to come to grips with the social and psychological implications of the abolition of divinity." Friedman footnotes here "the entire *Dialectic of Enlightenment*" as well as some stray pages from Marcuse, Horkheimer and Benjamin.

However, the Young Hegelians and the Frankfurt School diverged. "First, their [the Frankfurt School's] experience of the death of God was mediated through Nietzsche, a richer and more immediate source." The Young Hegelians did not have the good fortune of reading Nietzsche. Why the death of God becomes richer and more immediate by reading Nietzsche is not explained. "Second, the Young Hegelians greeted atheism with a sense of liberation. History did not permit the Frankfurt School such shallowness." Very nice. The Young Hegelians were not atheists. A perusal of Feuerbach's *Essence of Christianity* could disabuse Friedman of this idea, but he seems innocent of any textual familiarity of their writings. It is welcome news that "history" does not permit shallowness; perhaps Friedman can expand on this idea in another book. It is one of his favorite formulations; history is continually forcing the Frankfurt School to think.

The reader stumbles along with Friedman dazzled by the language and insight. "Adorno criticized Kierkegaard while Horkheimer wrote on Schopenhauer for similar reasons." Well said. Friedman imagines that the Young Hegelians formed two rival high school teams. After drawing up the teams, he concludes that the "Frankfurt School could never fit within the confines of such a neat schema." We then move onto "darker and more dangerous" origins of the Frankfurt School. The following chapters take up Nietzsche, Heidegger, Spengler and Freud.

The Frankfurt School came to Nietzsche because history allowed no escape. "They were impelled to move towards him for they were wise enough to realize that the crisis of modernity rested at least as much in the knowledge he had made available as it did with Marx.... Also, they had little choice in being influenced by Nietzsche, since they were Germans, whose teacher, for better or worse, had been Nietzsche's finest heir: Martin Heidegger." The only truth here, for which Friedman must henceforth be credited, is that the Frankfurt School was German.

Friedman cites some texts of Nietzsche and is content to state that the Frankfurt School learned from them. That he demonstrates the Frankfurt School's thought emerged out of or in contact with Nietzsche's is foreign to his method; he is pleased to register general parallels, and pumps up his analysis with half-truths. "The Frankfurt School learned an enormous amount from Nietzsche. In the first place, they took their understanding of the crisis of modernity.... From this they shared with Nietzsche a certain joy at the liberation afforded by the collapse of traditional metaphysics and morality." The "certain" here betrays the fraud: this statement means nothing or is false.

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From here to Heidegger, already announced as Nietzsche's heir; he never returns to this claim. Why Heidegger? Guess. "One could not study philosophy in Germany at the time of the Frankfurt School and avoid the influence of Martin Heidegger." Of course both Adorno and Horkheimer studied philosophy at the time of the Frankfurt School and avoided Heidegger quite successfully. In fact, only Marcuse was influenced by him. Oh well. As proof, he footnotes *Weimar Culture*, where Peter Gay states that Heidegger's influence was "far-reaching," one letter by Benjamin, and so on.

Friedman is dimly aware of some problems, e.g., Adorno never ceased to criticize Heidegger. Against all evidence, even some he trips over, he decides that Adorno protested the "use" of Heidegger's concepts but not the concepts themselves. He cites a passage of Adorno attacking the fetish of genuineness, which closes, "Such abuse, however, is not extrinsic to the concept of genuineness." How does Friedman read this passage? "The use of the concept and not the concept itself is what repels Adorno." Such perspicuity is abundant in this book. Marcuse's more complicated relationship to Heidegger is captured in the following lovely sentence: "Marcuse, in a way, and by Benjamin's standards, continued to work with Heidegger and to even risk fascism, for he had few alternatives." To judge this statement false would be generous.

Next we come to Spengler where the same procedure of manufacturing something out of nothing is employed. Adorno wrote two essays on Spengler, the second a brief lecture from 1955. No other substantial references to Spengler exist in the Frankfurt School oeuvre. Out of this empty box Friedman concludes that Spengler bestowed on the Frankfurt School a concept of culture and "sense of the future." "Spengler, more than Marx, created and nurtured the School's historical vision." Of course, beyond some "parallels," Friedman cannot show any Spenglerian impact.

Friedman continues through a chapter on Judaism and Freud to arrive at this startling conclusion: "What distinguishes the Frankfurt School from other forms of Hegelianized Marxism is the way that their historical and social concerns were mediated through a melange of other, at times antithetical, sources." Unfortunately, this only ties up Part I. Part II is titled "Posing the Problem of Modernity," and finds a veritable nestegg of crises: crises of the enlightenment, art, culture and the psyche. All these are contained in the "overarching crisis: the crisis of history." The crisis of history, in turn, is enveloped by the "general crisis of human existence." The crisis of human existence is "in a deeper sense, a crisis of everyday life." In its deepest sense these crises register the crisis of the academic mind trumping itself up as the *Weltgeist*. Part III is called "The Search for the Solution," and contains the usual amount of absurdities.

Friedman concludes with mumbo-jumbo. "The concern of the Frankfurt School for the erotic is simply the radicalization of the privatization implied by the universalization of the household (into a thing coterminus with society as a whole), which Marxism traditionally argued for." He runs at the mouth about death and related subjects. The Frankfurt School "chose the illogic of negative dialectics precisely because their position was untenable. They were trying to have the world while being lost in it. The intention was, in a way, touching."

Professor Friedman's intention to write on the Frankfurt School is, in a way, touching, but he is lost beyond logic and knowledge. This book ill serves its subject and publisher, but most of all, its author.

Russell Jacoby

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Vincent Geoghegan. *Reason and Eros: The Social Theory of Herbert Marcuse*. London: Pluto Press, 1981. 122 pages.

To read any of Marcuse's works today or just to think of him is to be reminded once again how much the American left has lost — not only through the fact of Marcuse's death or the political defeats and dissolutions of recent years. But how much we have lost through constrictions and repressions from within, self-imposed fences around our own imagination. Yet, recalling Marcuse is also to recall the hopes he preserved, his obstinate refusal of despair and quietism, his ceaseless efforts to help free the left from its own rigidity. For a great moment in the late 1960s and early 1970s, Marcuse's ideas and the movement got laced together; his name even got bandied about in the major media. Now of course there is a different picture. "Amongst the left," Geoghegan writes, "when he is mentioned at all, Marcuse is usually spoken of as a phase gone through, a dose of theoretical acne, the product of youthful folly, long surpassed by mature preoccupations — structuralism, for example" (pp. 1-2). But as Geoghegan remarks in the last sentence of his thoughtful little book, the left's neglect of Marcuse today does "not testify to theoretical sophistication on its part but, on the contrary, indicates a fundamental theoretical inadequacy which should be both deplored and...overcome" (pp. 103-104).

That remark is a sign of the honesty and spirit of solidarity with which Geoghegan presents his not uncritical survey of Marcuse's career in this most recent addition to Pluto Press's "Ideas in Progress" series, which already includes Boggs' *Gramsci's Marxism,* Poster's *Sartre's Marxism*, and some half dozen other compact studies. Like these and a few of its other companion volumes, *Reason and Eros* is sufficiently lucid to serve as a reliable introduction and sufficiently serious to keep self-styled seasoned hands full. Given the mandatory brevity, some themes get short shrift. Yet Geoghegan manages to include numerous significant particulars, as in his comments on Marcuse's slightly ambiguous appraisal of Leninism in the mid-1930s (pp. 33-35), and his alertness to the importance of Marcuse's 1941 essay, "Some Social Implications of Modern Technology" (pp. 64-67). Especially helpful in a handbook of this type are his discussion of Marcuse's views on the decisive role of fantasy in social theory (pp. 28-30) and his perceptive remarks on Marcuse's "courageous examination of the progressive component of the perversions" in *Eros and Civilization* (pp. 53-55). Even if Geoghegan did not write clearly, a book of this length could not help but spare us the boring reconstructions to which fuller commentaries are often prone. For the moment, then, *Reason and Eros* becomes *the* small book on Marcuse, replacing *Marcuse* (1970), MacIntyre's highly replaceable contribution to the "Modern Masters" series. (Paul Mattick's *Critique of Marcuse* [1972] is also small but quite a different sort of book.)

Geoghegan devised a clever plan that integrates dominant themes with chronology. The chapters treat in order "Authenticity and Labor" (centering around Marcuse's early Heideggerian essays and his 1932 book on Hegel's concept of historicity); "Critical Rationality" (the Frankfurt School essays of the 1930s and *Reason and Revolution*, 1941); "Eros" (mainly *Eros and Civilization*, 1955); "Technological Rationality" (centering around *Soviet Marxism,* 1958, and *One Dimensional Man*, 1964); and "Liberation" (the essays and books of the late 1960s and 1970s). If a single question traverses Marcuse's work, Geoghegan is probably right that it is the one Marcuse initially posed in the late 1920s: what is authentic existence and how is it possible? — the question that preoccupied Lukacs in his early, pre-Marxist writings and in many respects ran through his entire corpus as well. Geoghegan is also right to situate the starting point of Marcuse's particular pursuit of this problem in the havoc

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the 1920s played with orthodox Marxism's optimism. In the resulting uncertainty, "Marcuse was one of those who looked long and hard at the nature of and the relationship between the means and end of revolutionary Marxism." This in turn involved him in a life-long interrogation of (1) the philosophical foundations of Marxism; (2) the nature of the revolutionary subject; and (3) the obstacles facing the emergence of authentic existence (pp. 2-3).

On the whole, most results of this approach are good; a number of them are even better. On the notorious other hand, there are some problems. Several are minor, although they are finally connected to others larger. The book's chapter structure, for example, while helpful in many respects, also makes Marcuse appear to have done somewhat more theoretical bouncing around than he actually did; it facilitates one of Geoghegan's conclusions — namely, that Marcuse's work was, for all its power, eclectic when, in fact, much of his survey attests to its dynamic unity. In this regard, Geoghegan is also inattentive to an issue in the overall picture of Marcuse's theorizing which essays by Piccone and Delfini and Alfred Schmidt raised some years ago and which, in a novel vein, Michael Löwy has recently reformulated ("Marcuse and Benjamin," *Telos* 44). It concerns the place in the *whole* of Marcuse's work of what is variously called the Heideggerian, existentialist, and crypto-messianic element, which was most pronounced in the writings of the late 1920s and early 1930s. Rather than disappear, though, this element was muted — even suppressed — during Marcuse's association with the Institute for Social Research, it began to resurface by the mid-1950s, culminating in the ideas of the great refusal and new sensibility in the 1960s. Such a scheme is inconsistent with Geoghegan's own only in so far as it reduces further the already minimal weight of his claims regarding Marcuse's eclecticism.

Still on the matter of interpreting the phases of Marcuse's work, Geoghegan is wrong in his assertion that the essays of the 1930s are "remarkably lacking in strategic and tactical analysis" (p. 33). The problem here, and again it bears on Marcuse's *oeuvre* as a whole, is with both the dating and the word "remarkably." Marcuse was a social theorist and a moral philosopher and I am not clear what is so remarkable about the lack of political strategy and tactics in his writings. In addition, Marcuse's writings *prior* to the 1930s were hardly strategic or tactical in the sense Geoghegan means them, nor were his better known writings *from* the 1950s *through* the 1970s. The single exception is probably *Counter Revolution and Revolt* (1972) — his most immediately political book, and his least important.

This leads to the question of Geoghegan's overall appraisal of Marcuse's Marxism or, in terms more consistent with this appraisal, Marcuse's relation *to* Marxism. Geoghegan is fair and friendly but finally I think he has got things the wrong way around. His specific criticisms, while not new, are distinguished by their lack of sectarianism. Geoghegan is not happy, for example, with Marcuse's "ambivalence toward the proletariat"; his underestimation of the radical potential among "ordinary working people"; his overestimation of the role of marginal groups; and so forth (pp. 20, 37, 62). But there is no ritualistic workerism here. Then, in his interesting presentation of *Eros and Civilization*, Geoghegan is uneasy with Marcuse's supposedly uncritical appropriation of Freud. Yet, in his introduction he insists that "of particular note in Marcuse's analysis of the retardation of revolutionary praxis was his attempt to get to grips with that traditional lacuna in Marxist theory — the role of the human psyche. For those who are concerned with the link between what has become known as 'the personal and the political,' Marcuse's analysis [in his writings from the mid-1950s onward] is indispensable, for it is imbued with the conviction that what individuals do to each other at the sexual and interpersonal level is fundamentally linked to their

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behavior at all other levels, including the political" (p. 4). But this admittedly vital dimension of Marcuse's work is unthinkable without his turn to Freud in particular and his enduring impulse to move outside the Marxist frame in general. On the other side of the coin, Geoghegan seems willing to affirm some of Marcuse's own critical observations on Marx — that the latter tended mistakenly to envision the transition from capitalism to socialism as an unconscious process (p. 32), and that his conception of relations betwen society and nature remained marked by forms of domination (p. 99).

As to Geoghegan's more broad and basic criticisms of Marcuse's relation to Marxism, he first of all raises doubts about the claim that Marcuse's (and Adorno's and Horkheimer's) work in the 1930s amounted to a creative development of Marx's critique of political economy. "Marcuse," he writes, "like Horkheimer and Adorno, was in fact largely uninterested in economics — an understandable but not excusable lacuna" (p. 28). Instead, like the young Marx and the left Hegelians, Marcuse and the others were interested in demystifying consciousness. Geoghegan does observe in this connection that in his later writings Marcuse became more attentive to "structural determinations," but this is not really the point. For there is a more apt Marxist response to Geoghegan, the one raised in 1940 by Horkheimer, who believed the trouble with all economistic thinking, including the Marxist type, is that it attributes not too much but too *little* weight to the economy; it fails to grasp the extent to which, in the 20th century, capitalist relations of production reach into *all* dimensions of society. Thus, when the Frankfurt School theorists paid special attention to culture and consciousness, they were not ignoring economics but focusing on it. In turn, there is a critical (as distinct from orthodox) Marxist response to this response. Moishe Postone, for example, argues in a new manuscript that the Frankfurt School theorists ended with a static rather than dynamic analysis of late capitalism in part because of their failure to retrieve the real depth and scope of Marx's critique of modern production. Such an exchange might go on for some while without decisive results. I for one would be willing to concede Geoghegan's point, which seems to be that Marcuse was never properly a Marxist. But I am not willing to grant the apparent implication that there is something wrong with this.

Geoghegan puts the second and closely related broad criticism in the form of a question: "to what extent are the theoretical sources appropriated by Marcuse from outside the Marxist tradition actually compatible with that tradition?" (p. 103). Above all in the case of Marcuse's interpretation of Freud, Geoghegan notes in answer, the result is both a misreading of "the external source" and "the introduction of concepts which seem ill at ease amongst mainstream Marxist concepts." The second point there is quite right and I want briefly to pursue it: what of Marcuse's outside sources? Geoghegan makes no explicit criticism of the fact that Marcuse in his early writings drew important inspiration from the work of Wilhelm Dilthey (pp. 14-15), while in his discussion of "Technological Rationality" he is uneasy with Marcuse's tendency to be "quite responsive to the work of bourgeois sociology" (Veblen and Weber, p. 64), and with his interest in Schiller and the romantic concept of genius (p. 29). Each of these observations is even-handed enough, which is refreshing in view of some of the drivel written on these issues. But when pieced together they constitute censorship, even if in a mild and understanding form.

What about Marcuse's relation to Marxism, then, at least the general character of that relation? Bertolt Brecht is helpful here. In a small piece, "On My Teacher," Brecht said of Karl Korsch that the latter was finally only a guest at the home of the proletariat; his bags were always packed and he was ready to depart at any time —

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having set himself up as the doorman, Brecht was in a position to know. At all events, applying this to Marcuse, he can be said to have remained on the front porch, ready to defend the occupants against intellectual vandals, bill collelctors, and what have you, but also free to strike up friendships with folks from across the street, even from the other side of the tracks — the Schillers, Fouriers, Nietzsches, Diltheys, Heideggers, Freuds, Bretons and others.

I was surprised that Geoghegan did not refer to Marcuse's announcement in *An Essay on Liberation* (1969) that it is time to move from realism to surrealism, from Marx to Fourier. In one sense, this is a time-bound remark reflecting the spirit of the late 1960s and Marcuse's enthusiastic participation in it. But in another sense, it can be taken as a metaphor for Marcuse's entire work, which, from the outset, was never either Marxist or non-Marxist but always moving toward and beyond Marxism. What Geoghegan calls Marcuse's eclecticism, and considers a point against him, I would call his not-only-Marxism and a point in his favor. Geoghegan closes his sharp and valuable book asserting that he does not want to end on a critical note. "The weaknesses in Marcuse's work," therefore, "should in no way diminish its importance and continuing relevance for those who are seriously committed to a creative and dynamic Marxism" (p. 103). Fair enough, but in the same spirit, this alternative: the weaknesses of creative and dynamic Marxism should not detract from its enduring relevance to those struggling for freedom and happiness.

Paul Breines

Antonio Labriola. *Socialism and Philosophy*. Introduction by Paul Piccone. St. Louis: Telos Press, 1980. 223 pages.

Unlike other European countries, Italy has never experienced a secular transformation such as the French Revolution or a religious one such as the Protestant Reformation. Thus, Marxism and socialism have been the only viable liberating ideologies available. Given this state of affairs, it is not surprising that the tradition of Italian Marxism developed a distinctive character free of the undemocratic features of official Marxism-Leninism, the eclecticism of Social Democracy, and the political impotence of Hegelian or Western Marxism. Piccone proposes such a reading of Italian Marxism as having "redirected the aims of Marxist theory toward *pedagogy* and the creation of the conditions necessary for self-emancipation. . . the creation of a critical public able to sustain the Marxist project of social reconstruction" (p. 7).

This book is a republication of Labriola's long out-of-print book, along with the so-called fourth essay, "From One Century to Another" (previously unavailable in English), several other pieces, and Piccone's 55-page Introduction.

Beginning with Labriola's teacher, Piccone points out that Spaventa's great merit was his awareness of the problem of mediating the particular and the universal. From Spaventa, Labriola took his critical Hegelianism, according to which, Piccone writes, "the validity of Hegel's thought consisted primarily in its ability to provide adequate determinations for particularity" (p. 18). Labriola also appropriated Herbart's psychology, ethics, and pedagogy — though not his metaphysics — while becoming increasingly impressed by Germany's social-democratic experience (before success spoiled it). Of course, Labriola was not unaware of the difference between German and Italian conditions, and this is reflected in his attitude toward the founding of the Italian Socialist Party in the early 1890s. Thus, he was critical of the eclectic, relatively unprincipled party that emerged under the leadership of Turati, while favoring a

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smaller party, uncompromising in its principles, and dedicated to teaching workers.

Piccone claims that Labriola's thought outlined and partially transcended Western Marxism as developed from Lukacs' *History and Class Consciousness* to Adorno's *Negative Dialectics*. While always opposing viewing historical materialism as a metaphysics of matter, Labriola initially interpreted it as a philosophy of history, but eventually gave up this interpretation, leading him to question the labor theory of value as an unwarranted projection of the socialist future onto the capitalist present. Labriola also attempted to interpret the dialectic and *Capital* in terms of a "genetic method," but this ruled out any final systematization of revolutionary theory. In doing so, however, he anticipated Lukacs' class consciousness through his own notion of social psychology, developed a critique of the theory of historical factors that paralleled Lukacs' later critique of reification, and outlined an explanation why Marxism had grown in extent but not in depth — an idea subsequently elaborated by Korsch. For Labriola, the central problem was formulating a Marxist theory addressing the new historical conditions. He concluded, however, that such a theory was impossible: Marxism must be either revolutionary but unsystematic, or systematic but not revolutionary. According to Piccone, Labriola's only true heir is Gramsci (through Croce's mediation).

Piccone's reconstruction of Italian Marxism is quite fruitful, and his historical argument convincing. Croce's critique of Labriola, however, was not as destructive as Piccone claims. In fact, though Labriola later disagreed, Croce thought that he was developing Labriola's ideas.[1] While Piccone claims that they arrived at their conclusions by different paths, Croce's talk of historical materialism as an explanatory principle is his way of rejecting the philosophy-of-history interpretation and the systematization project.[2] The same applies to Labriola's and Croce's interpretations of the labor theory of value. For both it is essentially a principle of comparison between the existing capitalist society and something that does not exist.

Socialism and Philosophy consists of ten long letters to Sorel. In the first one Labriola comments on Sorel's complaint that historical materialism was little appreciated in France (p. 62). Such a complaint he sees as a sign of wishful thinking and utopianism, for "the whole theory in its entirety, that is to say, as a *philosophy*, can never become one of the articles of universal popular culture" (p. 66). This letter seems to plead for the necessity of myths, or else it is a realistic appraisal of the long way that socialist philosophers have to go to win the masses to their side. In his second letter, Labriola further emphasizes this point by complaining about the unavailability of Marx's and Engels' works. Reading them "has so far been largely a privilege of the initiated!" (p. 67). But even if these two difficulties were overcome, "Marxism is not, and will not be, confined to the works of Marx and Engels. . .since this theory is in its very essence critical, it cannot be continued, applied and improved unless it criticizes itself" (p. 75).

In the fourth letter, Labriola claims that the essence of Marxism is the Socratic method, which is aware of the limitations of understanding and confident primarily about *how* to reach knowledge (p. 93). Such an approach Labriola considers "a tendency of our times" (p. 105), corresponding to "the art of methodical experiment" (p. 99). This tendency is "the perfect identification of philosophy, or of critically self-conscious thought, with the materials of knowledge, in other words, the complete elimination of the traditional distinction between philosophy and science" (p. 105).

1. Benedetto Croce, *Materialismo storico ed economia marxistica* (Bari, 1968), pp. 1-19 and 121-137 (Chapters I and V).

2. *Ibid.*, pp. 5ï-104 and 121-137 (Chapters III and V).

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According to Labriola, Marx and Engels "gave up philosophical writing in the strict professional meaning of the term, and they became the most perfect types of *philosophical scientists*" (p. 108).

In his next to last letter Labriola outlines his views on the history, historiography, philosophy of religion in general, and of Christianity in particular. He approves of the fact "that the socialists have been wise enough to write into their platform: Religion is a private matter" (p. 148). But this is more a tactical attitude than a philosophical statement, for "the people of the future will very probably dispense with all transcendental explanations of the practical problems of daily life" (p. 149). In fact, he sees as the only task of the Italian socialist movement at that time the preparation of the small middle class for democratic education (p. 148).

The most striking theme in the last letter is the elaboration of an earlier theme that may be described as Labriola's Socraticism. In the last page, while arguing against utopianism, he advocates a maieutic approach to social change. Accordingly, Marx "went about modestly collecting in present society the indications for its transition into the coming society, for instance, the rise of cooperatives (real ones!) in England and similar things, and to him fell the task (especially by the work spent on the International) to be *the midwife of the future, which is not quite the same as being its fanciful builder*" (p. 161, italics added).

In the academic year 1900-1901, the turn of the century provided Labriola with the pretext to synthesize all he had thought before around the theme of the spirit of the 19th century, with the understanding that it "does not begin mechanically, with the first calendar page of 1801, but perhaps on or about July 14, 1789." The result of this is "From One Century to Another" later known as Labriola's famous but unpublished "fourth" essay.

During this century a very special quality emerged: "for the first time men feel that they themselves make history by means of organized collectivity" (p. 205). This realization has laid the groundwork for the "*ethics of socialism*: i.e., the *postulate* of *solidarity* as opposed to the *axiom* of competition" (p. 206) that prevails in liberal science.

The whole "century" can be seen as a steady progress, through compromise, toward the idea of liberty and equality. The emphasis, however, is on "the contradictions permeating the entire century (active and passive peoples; city and country; proletariat and bourgeoisie; science and faith; church and state; etc.)" (p. 219). This leads to a discussion of the Risorgimento — certain the most important development in 19th-century Italian history. As Gramsci was to argue a few years later, he sees it as a relatively passive development. Real developments came after its completion in 1870. Yet, it remained a premature event insofar as Italians "did not meet the new order with proportionate exposure to modern politics" (p. 222), and therefore they were "unable to confront successfully the world's political conditions" (p. 222).

A careful analysis of Labriola's third and fourth essays supports Piccone's thesis that there is a distinct tradition of Italian Marxism with education as its central element. In the fourth essay, the most striking feature is not only Labriola's criticism of the Risorgimento — his labelling it "passive" thus prefiguring Gramsci's analysis of it as a passive revolution — but Labriola's attitude toward Socrates and toward science. This is important both because it adds another dimension to the pedagogical thesis and because it locates the philosophy-of-praxis tradition as part of another, older tradition: that of Socratic philosophy.

Maurice A. Finocchiaro

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Peter Caws. *Sartre*. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1979.

Douglas Collins. *Sartre as a Biographer*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1980.

Gila J. Hayim. *The Existential Sociology of Jean-Paul Sartre*. Amherst, Mass.: University of Massachusetts Press, 1980.

While the imminent *Pléiade* edition of Sartre's literary writings promises to attract fresh interest in many of his texts so far unpublished, Sartre's known *oeuvre* has continued to produce a steady flow of commentaries. In an article commemorating the first anniversary of Sartre's death, Michel Contat has logged a year rich in colloquia, books and artistic events honoring Sartre in all French-speaking countries as well as Germany, Portugal, England, and the United States.[1] What most recent tributes share is a heightened urgency for capturing the global sensibility at the heart of each Sartrean enterprise, regardless of particularities in his choice of context or genre.

Similarly, though ostensibly addressing themselves to particular aspects of Sartre's thought, the Caws, Collins and Hayim works strongly convey a need for dealing with Sartre's entire output as a matter of spirit rather than strict erudition. Perhaps a principal reason for this approach is the fact that Sartre scholarship is still at an exegetic-defensive stage: most of his thought has yet to be constructively absorbed into the broader syntheses he hoped for, i.e., the "structuring anthropology" outlined in his *Critique of Dialectical Reason*. Ultimately, of course, Sartre proved that he had no interest in producing the closed system of thought (the totalization) that he so often invoked. Caws is certainly right to point out that most of Sartre's ambitious works open with a mass of brilliant insights to be methodically worked out, but soon "peter out...with the promise of a second volume which characteristically fails to appear" (p. 3). Nonetheless, in assesing Sartre's relation to his unfinished works, Alain Robbe-Grillet seems closer to the mark. As he recently remarked, in the last analysis we must be grateful for the projects that were never completed: Sartre, who wanted to enclose the world in a totalizing system along the lines of Spinoza and Hegel, "was also haunted by the idea of freedom which, thank God, came to undermine all of his enterprises"; thus, while aspiring to be the last philosopher of the totality, he is bound to lead the vanguard of new structures of thought marked by "uncertainty, overdependence and a sense of skidding."[2]

Not all three books here read this feature as positively as Robbe-Grillet. In Caws' case, one is left with a feeling that he would rather stick to *Being and Nothingness*, where Sartre's ontology is still unburdened by the somewhat fuzzier categories of sociality that gradually seeped in through the Marxist encounter. Almost in contrast, Collins' fascinating study, despite its limited title, eventually reads in Sartre clear tendencies of a "MasterThinker"; although Collins does distinguish Sartre from Glucksmann's now infamous label, the distinction is weak and too close for comfort. What seems to annoy Collins is Sartre's passion for biographical verisimilitude — fictional dates and places to tie in with psychic events in Flaubert's personal history. Collins accuses Sartre of a "coherence" rather than a "correspondence theory of truth" and consequently, of a tendency "to galvanize everything into a unified theory" (pp. 76, 107). I shall later return to this point to suggest that Collins has misconstrued the *raison d'être* of the Flaubert work. But even on a superficial level, given Collins' supple

1. "Sartre, un an après," *Le Monde*, April 17, 1981.
2. "Le parti de Roland Barthes," *Le Nouvel Observateur*, April 30, 1981, p. 55.

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and clearly sympathetic approach to Sartre's unorthodox idea of biography, this accusation evaporates into mainstream scholasticism. It does not really affect Collins' excellent critique and it still leaves Sartre's loose ends untied, as it should.

One of the principal virtues of Hayim's slim volume is a lack of concern with the sticky details that have for so long exiled Sartre's capricious terminology and illustrations into the tenebrae of strictly academic discourse. Far from depicting him in mainstream sociological tones, Hayim's portrait of Sartre is cogent, unpretentious and a welcome breath of fresh air. From the early ontological categories to the sociality of the *Critique,* Hayim follows the growth of Sartre's subject-based critique of positivist sociology and dogmatic Marxism. And, by weighing Sartre's views against institution-based critiques (by now, equally common to both Western and Marxist sociology), Hayim clearly brings out the Sartrean dilemmas of action (group praxis) in the context of social immobilism (serial and institutional existence).

In short, the Collins and Hayim books, while still in a largely exegetic-comparative key, work their way freely through Sartre's total and totalizing viewpoints, not just in order to present him in the best possible light. For those familiar with Sartre's numerous personnae, the engrossing feature of both these books is bound to lie in the proximity to Sartre's own spirit, that is, the rich, lucid, though often contradictory way he described his own intentions and problematic through lectures and interviews. Caws' book, on the other hand, fights against unfortunate odds imposed at the outset by the formal requirements of a "Series on the Arguments of the Philosophers." This means that, with the exception of reworking ideas from *L'Imaginaire* in *L'Idiot*, Sartre had, for some 25 years, lost interest in the narrow philosophical technicalities of his early works, especially *Being and Nothingness.* To illustrate, "in my present book on Flaubert," Sartre said in 1969, "I have replaced my earlier notion of consciousness (although I still use the word a lot), with what I call *le vécu* — lived experience."[3] Clearly, in view of all the controversy about the freedom of the Sartrean consciousness and particularly the problem of its compatibility with Marxism, this is a shocking statement. But there it is and, as a result, many of Caws' discussions are tainted with a sense of *passé.* His excellent critical exposition of the philosophical-academic writings is definitely in favor of Sartre's early intellectual rigor; consequently, as it goes on, his book loses vitality. It too "peters out" into occasional oversimplifications about Sartre's later socio-historical views. For, given the fact that Sartre seems to have later thought of *Being and Nothingness* as something of a warm-up exercise, it just is not fair for Caws to claim that the only thing to change by the time of the *Critique* is the *level* of complexity and not of ontology (p. 156). The question whether Sartre eventually resolved the dilemma of ontology and sociality places Caws in a different camp from Collins and Hayim. Caws is certainly right to criticize Sartre's early rigid conception of subjectivity and its inability to account for materiality (p. 96). But Caws never seriously considers the fact that, for Sartre, materialism and materiality grew into critical mediations that, *because* of his earlier ideas on intentionality and teleology, enabled him to found a viable conception of a subject-based historical dialectic. In essence, Caws does not really see any point in a Marxist critique of Marxism (pp. 142ff.). Despite a long section defending Sartre's idea of dialectical reason against Lévi-Strauss (pp. 147ff.), he frequently displays a reified understanding of both materialism and the dialectic, precisely of the type that Sartre's *Critique* set out to fight. Since Caws pays only cursory attention to Sartre's materialist dialectic of praxis and, within it, the special place of scarcity, his entire discussion on sociality fizzles out

3. "Itinerary of a Thought," *New Left Review*, 58 (November-December 1969), p. 48.

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into fragmentary descriptions of highlights from the *Critique*. Thus, there are no dialectical connections between praxis-process and the social order and-or the superstructure — collectives like values, ideas and institutions. For example, what Caws has to say about interest (in the *Critique*) and later, about the "objective spirit" (*L'Idiot*) is valid but also disjointed and topical. His discussion never quite ties it in with the individual-social dimensions of the practico-inert as Sartre thought of it.

Quite apart from these limitations, however, Caws' book ranks among the best for those interested in following the way that Sartre's philosophy was eventually channeled into other genres of social thought. The point remains that Sartre never ceased to raise philosophical *questions*, regardless of the language he chose for communicating them. Nevertheless, he abandoned the language of philosophy because of its limited potential for social communication and, as he believed later, its inability to establish man's roots in time and history. As Caws also demonstrates, Sartre's conception of the function of philosophy was very close to that of poetry: as with poetry, Sartre felt that philosophical discourse is opaque, that is, imprisoned in its own linguistic structure. Therefore, his rejection, both brilliant and vehement, of philosophical language was aimed directly at its inability to achieve translucency and comprehension (Chapter II).

As expected, the issues of poetry versus prose, philosophy versus biography, and language in general become the main lines of inquiry in Collins *Sartre as a Biographer*. Sartre's obsession with translucency receives an excellent treatment here. Collins brings out its organic connection to Sartre's own choice of language, as well as to his evolving idea of freedom, intersubjectivity, bad faith, and the ethics of action. In turn, these categories and modes of existence are effectively employed for reading the essential Sartre through his biographies. Biography, of course, turned out to be the illustration *par excellence* of the type of thinking that Sartre had hoped to found by writing his "Prolegomena to a Future Anthropology" — his own definition of the *Critique*. In this sense, Collins' choice of subject is really perfect, particularly as it culminates in the study of *L'Idiot*. The continuing controversy over the length and the subject of this work has actually made it harder to assess Sartre's achievement and rationale.[4] In simple terms, *L'Idiot* represents many things for Sartre. It is at once an early project and, as he often explained in relation to the *Critique,* the goal of all his projects — literary, philosophical and historical-Marxist. Though it fathered the *Critique*, the latter was only an introduction to a future "anthropology." But, since *L'Idiot* is a novel, not an anthropology, it has to be considered as an illustration of the methodology envisaged by Sartre's anthropology. An illustration indeed! And only *one* at that, and again, just to a prolegomena; therefore, a mere pebble in the foundation of an open-ended structure. The question, then, is in what way Flaubert's biography illustrates the methodology for a new science of man?

The trouble with this question is that it is quite old and, although Sartre answered it on many occasions, his rationale still seems obscure to many people. Collins' otherwise superb book also betrays the same confusion since it concludes by reproaching Sartre for inventing too many facts, dates and encounters. Yet, furnishing or inventing *as many "facts" as possible* is precisely the point and Sartre's answer to the question. What Sartre tries to show in *L'Idiot* is that, even if we take a man like Flaubert, whose life and works are generally considered well known, and even if we *could* fill in all possible gaps with actual or probable information, we still could not claim that the facts collected in this way could account for the real Flaubert. Facts about human

4. On this and many other issues, recent books by O. Todd and R. Aronson have really missed the mark.

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behavior cannot be shown to determine the specific praxis of an individual — any individual — in the same way that facts about stones coincide with precise knowledge of stones. Therefore, no matter how many facts or theories we gather to stuff the holes in a particular life, all we can claim to have achieved is deeper comprehension, not knowledge. In sum, the objective of *L'Idiot* is not biographical accuracy; instead, the book is a concrete case of the targets in Sartre's critique of hyperempiricism, positivist sociology and scientistic Marxism: for Sartre, comprehension, that is, the *unravelling* of so-called facts, is all we can strive for, at least, at the present stage of our knowledge about man. This view cannot be overemphasized, for it is really Sartre's own; consequently, it is troubling to find that a sophisticated book like Collins' is unable to deal with Sartre's proposition for the simple reason that the author has not understood it. The future anthropology that Sartre was trying to practice is probably quite impossible. However, it is important to understand that he was *not* trying to show us how to write a biography!

All the same, the Collins book is a gold mine of information on the periods related to the three biographies (Baudelaire, Genet and Flaubert), as well as on Sartre's own development. There are especially good sections — first, on the little-known relationship between the psychology of Angelo Hesnard and Sartre's lived experience; later, on the relative importance of influences from Bergson, Dilthey, Husserl, Marx and Freud on Sartre's existential psychology. Finally, following two solid chapters on Flaubert, Collins turns to an interesting section on narcissism (including Sartre's) in connection with artistic production and neurosis. Here Collins deals far too seriously with Sartre's claim that he lacked a superego because he really did not have a father: after all, Sartre was born in a French home and practically had to read Descartes in the crib! In addition, I have problems with Collins' own Marcusean preoccupations with the prospects against domination in the concluding section, but, on the whole, his book remains outstanding.

The main objective of Hayim's book is to translate the relevance of Sartre's content and methods into the language and concerns of sociology and social science in general. Her work is premised on the continuity of (philosophical) ideas from *Being and Nothingness* to the expanded sociality categories of the *Critique* (pp. xvi, 69). To place Sartre's early philosophy in the context of sociological inquiry, Hayim juxtaposes it to fundamental concepts from Durkheim, George Mead and Max Weber. Freedom, subjectivity, bad faith and the Other are smoothly carried over from the context of ontology to the study of sociality, materiality and Sartre's theory of action. Hayim's marvelous way with words succeeds in the impossible: in a deceptively subdued, economic style, she disregards Sartre's idiosyncratic language and manages to bring out the internal unity of his problematic without lessening the poignancy of his formulations. Mistakes are occasional and, for the most part, terminological, as in the case of "serial and praxis groups" (pp. 83ff.). For Sartre, praxis is the foundation of *any and all* social existence, whether individual, serial or group-based, irrespective of its efficacy, that is, the degree of freedom it really achieves. Moreover, since series and groups are formal terms with distinct social content, it is confusing to speak of a serial group. Similarly, Hayim is wrong that "seriality is common to all *unorganized* and marginal human groups" (p. 83, my emphasis). As her own analysis fully demonstrates, for Sartre seriality is the social principle of all organized institutions, from systems of values and ideas, to political parties, bureaucracies and state organization. Fortunately, on the substance of all these themes, Hayim does an excellent job indeed. By linking the practico-inert to serial praxis (praxis-process) and to "bad faith," she accentuates Sartre's notion of circularity and, within it, the

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meaning of necessity. Of all three books here, Hayim's alone dwells lucidly enough on the historical-materialist aspect of necessity. In addition to scarcity (negativity), Hayim investigates the positive-negative character of all objects that constantly dehumanize and become humanized by praxis — "vampire objects" that, according to Sartre, can range from codes of social behavior to the "exigencies" of machines. Also, insofar as state legitimacy feeds on praxis-process and individual bad faith, the parasitic character of authority is shown as an integral part of Sartre's critique of institutions (pp. 124-135). Thus, Hayim concludes, Sartre's notion of the practico-inert, the domain that both propels and recycles praxis in history, is a crucial weapon in his critique of modernity (pp. 147-148).

In sum, these definitely sympathetic treatments of Sartre's accomplishments suggest a clear reversal of the uneasiness long associated with his ideas. It may well be that, as our thought patterns begin to catch up with his own tentative spirit, we may be finding ourselves more willing to reconcile our existential uncertainty with an equally uncertain and open-ended attitude toward a "totalizing knowledge."

Eleni Mahaira-Odoni

André Glucksmann. *The Master Thinkers.* Translated by Brian Pearce. New York: Harper and Row. $16.95.

Cynicism, confusion and despair have been among the responses to the collapse of the various New Left movements and the disastrous aftermath of the war in Indochina. To many former true believers, God failed when the ugly side appeared of countries and movements once claimed as liberating. As one of the French "New Philosophers" expressing the disillusionment of one strand of the generation of 1960s and 1970s activists, André Glucksmann accordingly rejects not only socialism's worst consequences, but also its history, its achievements, and its very intellectual premises. In a book that manages to combine arrogance with a celebration of ignorance, literary elegance with a refusal to carefully argue his points, Glucksmann lays the holocausts of our times at the doorstep of the "master thinkers" he holds responsible alike for the contemporary socialist and non-socialist views of statecraft and politics: Fichte, Hegel, Marx and Nietzsche. Glucksmann's main thesis speaks louder than all possible caveats: "Under colour of learning the master thinkers erected the mental apparatus which is indispensable for launching the grand final solutions of the 20th century and they did this on a large scale and quite openly."

Such an argument is at once preposterous and intriguing. Preposterous because even if Stalin had vague roots in texts written by one of Glucksmann's protagonists, Hitler's derivation from the German idealist tradition is about as remote as is that of the American planners of Hiroshima or Vietnam. Whatever the possible sins of the "master thinkers," racism and irrationalism on the one hand and pragmatism on the other, there are more arguable intellectual intimates of Auschwitz and Vietnam. Glucksmann's argument also is preposterous for the central role it gives to thought in human history. All domination, he argues, needs a text. All Marxists, along with the elites of all modern bureaucracies, believe in "the one-and-only Text," but *which* text or *how* they interpret it hardly matters. This belief, far more than its specific contours, is for Glucksmann the key to oppression today. The rulers, he argues, become the text's guardians, render the people both ignorant and respectful, and above all force them to *shut up*. But surely Glucksmann is speaking more of his own experiences as a Maoist leader than of the world inhabited by most of us. During the Cultural

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Revolution millions of Chinese may have waved and quoted the Red Book; it is hard to imagine Adolf Eichmann quoting *Mein Kampf*, or Lieutenant Calley quoting anything.

Nevertheless, Glucksmann's desire to get to the root of the Left's failings, and to find this in its attachment to the logic of domination, will be intriguing to many who are concerned today to seriously re-examine what the Left is and has been. The heart of the book which would affirm such an audacious thesis is, however, less an argument than an elliptical, deeply ironic mood-piece making its points mostly by assertions followed by supporting citations. For example, Glucksmann pieces together whatever evidence he can assemble for their common anti-Semitism and hostility to "all who wander," and then sweepingly asserts that "the master thinkers hand over to the master purgers, who in the Nazi camps mix Jews with homosexuals, and in the Russian camps herd together everyone who deviates." We encounter in Glucksmann's Hegel the philosopher of the modern state, not at all the formulator of the "algebra of revolution" who, in Nazi theoretician Carl Schmitt's formulation, "died" on the day Hitler took power. Nor is Glucksmann's Marx the founder of the most significant modern movement *against* domination. He is rather the man who wrote *Capital* from the point of view of the capitalist master and not the worker, reflecting both there and in his reductionism a deep commitment to dominating rather than liberating the workers. And Nietzsche is not the individualist facing the destructive trends of modern society and the modern state, but its ultimate ideologist, giving full and direct expression to its will to power.

As serious history of ideas, *The Master Thinkers* fails dismally. Not only does Glucksmann lift out isolated fragments to support his case while ignoring central themes and concerns of each thinker, but he also ignores the internal development of each as well as the development from thinker to thinker. Beyond these methodological faults Glucksmann is, very simply, wrong. The dialectic, motor of Hegelian and Marxian thought, is a process of negative thinking whose natural elements are contradiction, destabilization and criticism, as fundamental moving forces in human life. *Doctrines* derived from these thinkers' conclusions may well function to stabilize and pacify — indeed, to dominate. But in this sense Stalin's vision of Marxism is no more authentic than Glucksmann's — it is a distortion through and through.

Indeed, Hegel and Marx may be termed thinkers of domination to the extent that *any* genuine rationalism seeks to grasp, to comprehend, in fact to master intellectually the world it confronts. Glucksmann seeks to link this hallmark of any thought that does not simply register the facts, but sees them in their process of being produced and judges them in terms of their adequacy, with domination. In this he is simply taking liberties with meaning. *Mastery*, after all, describes some of the most vital aspects of human development. Need it entail the enslavement of humans and the disruption of nature?

Certainly there is no guarantee that these will not happen, that a Pol Pot regime will not devour the people it set out to liberate. Glucksmann is right: revolutionaries (but not only revolutionaries) have sought power, preferably *all power*. And there is in the revolutionary purpose a deep temptation to use the power to bring "new" people into being through terror, intimidation and education. But our history teaches not that collective struggle necessarily leads to heightened domination, nor that its intellectual guides intended genocide, but rather that in actual historical situations struggles for human betterment can become virtually inseparable from domination. As Sartre's plays convey so well, these struggles have nowhere been waged by liberated and fully mature individuals under ideal conditions, but by people of this world with all their

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failings, and under conditions awarding victory to those who forge themselves into the most effective, even most deadly, weapons of combat.

While understanding such tragic ambiguities requires close historical study, Glucksmann, for all his emphasis on the central role of thought, betrays a deep hostility to any thought that claims to know. Socrates, who asked questions and claimed to know nothing, is pitted against Plato, the man with a program, in a discussion that would return the history of philosophy to its starting point. Similarly, Glucksmann concludes by rethinking the great French Revolution, all of whose historians he accuses of having falsely reduced the enormous multiplicity of phenomena to a few simple principles, indeed to One Great Event.

If Glucksmann's rejection of general concepts as tools of domination abandons the field of understanding and is congruent with his championing questioning over answering, his rejection of any and all "mastery" leads him to champion individual riots and rebellions over large-scale collective action (although he retains a soft spot for the FLNs and NLFs as long as they are not in power). Having abstracted the real tensions and ambiguities of human struggle into a will to power as the moving principle of our history, Glucksmann can offer no alternatives but ignorance and rebellion, and so appropriately concludes not with a political vision but with a literary flourish.

Ronald Aronson

Martin Carnoy and Derek Shearer. *Economic Democracy: The Challenge of the 1980s.* White Plains: M.E. Sharpe, 1980.

This is a major work on the prospects for socialism in the U.S. Nevertheless, like Mitterand's election, it does not generate much enthusiasm. Perhaps it is a case of too little and too late as far as socialsim is concerned. The dimness of the socialist allure is ironic, for this is a time when the evils of capitalism are being extensively and devastingly chronicled. Furthermore, there is widespread acceptance of the accuracy of these chroniclers, even among leading capitalists.[1] Poverty, unemployment, social pathology, pollution, and perhaps most portentous, the need for the people to lower their expectations, are rampant. Yet, the socialist alternative is not being seriously considered at any level of society.

Perhaps it is time to take a harder look at the weaknesses of socialist theory. That is what *Economic Democracy* enables us to do -- although far from its intention -- by its omissions as much as by its inclusions. Carnoy and Shearer do not say that they are advocating socialism. However, their concept of "economic democracy" and their strategy for its attainment correspond closely to major aims of the socialist tradition: "For us, the essential elements of any strategy of fundamental reform in the United States today are: (1) the shift of investment control from corporate domination to the public; and (2) the reconstruction of economic decision-making through democratic, worker- and worker-consumer controlled production.... Employees can produce cooperatively, their wages can be largely the direct fruit of their labor, and they themselves can decide the best way to produce and how to produce in a democratically planned economy" (pp. 4-5).

1. See, for example, Felix Rohatyn in *The New York Review of Books*, January 22, 1981, among numerous other articles.

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They distinguish themselves from the old left in their emphasis on production rather than consumption issues, reflecting the concern with "alienation" of recent years. In this they parallel the French Socialists' espousal of "auto-gestation" as the one new wrinkle in the socialist bag.

Even with their advocacy of democratic control of investment and worker's control at the plant level (which does not go so far as syndicalism, as Carnoy and Shearer propose no great transformation in political institutions), the changes which the authors seek are minimal.

Here is the first and foremost weakness of socialism: even the mildest variety appears incapable of attainment. Is this because a "minimal" form of socialism cannot capture the imagination as a more radical restructuring might? This is certainly one possibility, although there seems little hunger for radical change in the U.S. today. The authors' "hopeful signs" are paltry indeed, and since publication of the book, the fortunes of radicalism appear even dimmer.

The bulk of the book consists of a detailed and fascinating account of experiments in public ownership, worker ownership and control, worker-controlled investment, and laws providing for extensive protection of worker's rights and employment security. These examples are all from Western capitalist nations and they show that there is still potential, especially in the U.S., for capitalism to be made more humane through reforms. Alternative cooperative institutions could meet some pressing needs. We might have, as in West Germany, municipally-owned savings banks, which provide extensive financing for building worker's housing.

There is only a brief comment on economic institutions in Communist countries (and no attention is given to Eurocommunists' proposals). Perhaps the authors feel that all that transpires in these nations is beneath contempt, and that they have conducted no social or economic experiments which can provide enlightenment for Western socialists. It is particularly unfortunate that only one paragraph is devoted to the Yugoslav experiment with workers' control. This might have illuminated the central question posed by economic democracy, which Carnoy and Shearer never directly confront: How can workers' control promote the common good, either on a national or international scale? It is an article of faith of decentralizing socialists that their desired institutions will eliminate workers' alienation and environmentally damaging and wasteful production, while at the same time insure economic stability and production of needed goods on a national (if not international) level. There is no evidence to support this faith. In the case of Yugoslavia, even with the centralizing tendencies of economic planning and the League of Communists, "market socialism" frequently leads to unemployment, inequities, and economic dislocation. Studies of producer co-ops in the U.S. have likewise shown that such enterprises maintain the same relation to the market as those which are capitalist owned. More to the point, worker ownership seems to bring no transformation to the human soul.[2] Oddly, Carnoy and Shearer never say precisely what decisions they expect workers to be making in their transformed society. They thus avoid the most difficult question: how to bring unity out of diversity.

None of this is to suggest that the socialist institutions described by Carnoy and Shearer have been dismal failures. On the contrary, where workers participate more actively in decision making, productivity as well as job satisfaction increases and more

2. Edward Greenberg's study of attitudes of participants in plywood cooperatives indicates more of a "capitalist mentality" than appears among ordinary workers. Cf. "Industrial Self-Management and Political Attitudes," in *American Political Science Review*, March 1981, pp. 29-42.

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attention is given to workplace safety and workers' welfare in general. However, as guideposts for the future, producers' co-ops and the like have limited value. This is especially the case because the authors pay hardly any attention to the emerging shape of the world and domestic U.S. economy. We hear little or nothing about the dependance of U.S. industries on the markets, minerals or even labor of the Third World, the role and power of the multinational corporations and the mushrooming of defense industries (which are themselves being internationalized).[3] There is little scope for decision-making by anyone at the local plant level.

Beyond the locus of decision-making, other changes in the U.S. economy have a bearing on workers' control. As Emma Rothschild has shown, jobs in agriculture and "older productive industries" are declining at a rapid rate, and are being replaced with jobs in the service sector.[4] The U.S. is becoming like a city, a headquarters for productive enterprises carried out elsewhere, and a service entertainment town. In place of making things, people are increasingly providing services to eaters and drinkers, sick and elderly, businesses, athletes and entertainers.[5] Workers' control in the context of this type of employment does not accord well with classical socialist conceptions of workshop democracy. For example, "bosses" are often neither capitalists nor managers, but professionals. There is little in socialist theory relevant to democratizing a hospital, school or social service agency.

Also included in the service sector are public employees, of whom there are more and more. Presumably, they are carrying out the mandates of democratically elected legislators. Economic democracy would be in direct conflict with political democracy if it were left to public employees to decide what projects would be pursued. Paradoxically, the public sector may be fertile ground for recruitment to socialism. Much of the work of public employees lies in compensating for the inadequacies of capitalism. They do not generally measure their success by "profits" but by some conception of the public good or the satisfaction of the most urgent needs. For example, the planning profession, while presently functioning mostly as tidiers of the capitalist mess, inevitably fosters a vision of the long term needs of society in its practitioners.

The servicing of capitalism requires not only a large public sector, but also a non-profit sector — foundations, charities, churches, universities, public interest organizations, therapists of all kinds, etc. In these organizations, profit is likewise not the standard by which operations are judged. They rarely rejoice at how profitable they have enabled capitalism to be. Every so often, one hears of a professor at some distinguished business school (surely the most profit-oriented type of service establishment), lamenting the failure of business schools, not because profits are lagging, but because corporations lack "social responsibility." People working in this sector, as in the public one, might be mobilized by a socialist vision, but the issue of workers' control may not be central to their concerns.

These are serious omissions in Carnoy and Shearer's economic analysis. Their political strategy for the attainment of economic democracy is not very promising either. They call their approach "populist" and put their faith in the organization of grass-roots movements around issues such as inflation, worker rights and neighborhood self-government. They suggest, wisely, working within the present two-party system

3. This has been extensively described in Richard Barnet, *The Lean Years* (New York, 1980).

4. "Reagan and the Real America," in *The New York Review of Books*, February 5, 1981, pp. 12-18.

5. A little noticed aspect of the Billie Jean King case: athletes now travel with hairdressers as well as business agents.

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rather than embarking on another probably futile effort at building a new party. However, they make two questionable assumptions. First of all, throughout the book, there is a suggestion that government is relatively neutral, and that a majority of numbers can triumph over a minority of wealth. Thus, in their chapter on democratic technology, they suggest that the government should support technology, for decentralization and democratic participation (p. 232). Secondly, they suggest that there is already a substantial and growing radical movement, especially on state and local levels. They cite as evidence the election of a few radicals here and there, the work of ACORN, PIRG, student activity, and alternative policy networks (e.g., EPEA, IPS, URPE).[6]

This flickering activity, however bright it may have been in 1978 or 1979, seems considerably dimmer after the Reagan election. The current political situation has had not a radicalizing, but a stupefying effect. This is likely to intensify when budget cuts reduce the ranks of public service employees, private non-profit workers and other pointy-headed intellectual employment. Those remaining (in these possible constituencies for socialism) are likely to be insecure and cautious rather than confident and militant. New jobs will be provided by the billions of dollars devoted to defense industries, which may well be implanted in almost every community, and in satellite services for these defense workers. This economic structure, with its security clearances and cold war mentality, is destined to enforce conformism and quietism.

Furthermore, it is true that in the last decade radicals of various kinds have had surprising success in state and local elections. However, one might guess that if such elected radicals begin to have any serious effect on policy, conservative Political Action Committees will swing into action. Just as on the national level they are decimating the ranks of "liberals," they could pick off troublesome local representatives on the left.

Carnoy and Shearer are far too optimistic about the political fortunes of socialist reform. Yet, the evils of capitalism remain unabated; why does the socialist alternative appear so hopeless in the U.S.? Co-optation and repression are part of the answer. The latter is fostered not so much by anti-subversive laws and FBI harassment, but by the circumstance that most employers, public and private, do not look kindly on employees who openly advocate socialism. It is almost necessary to be a capitalist or otherwise self-employed in order to be socialist in this country!

Socialism has also an exceedingly bad press in the U.S. It is associated in the popular mind almost entirely with "totalitarianism," "crimes of Stalin," and generally unappealing, strange and primitive foreign regimes. Those who are more sophisticated see the domestic advocates of socialism as sectarians embroiled in doctrinal disputes rather than speaking to the needs of the average apple-pie eating, church-going and flag-waving citizen. Of course, establishment forces seek to ridicule socialism and promote confusion within socialist ranks whenever possible, as in the campaign by the FBI against the Socialist Worker's Party. Nevertheless, there are few clear voices of socialism in America today. Perhaps this age is no longer receptive to oratory, although revivalist preachers fare well. The socialist message is not getting across.

External factors are not the whole story. There are weaknesses within socialist theory itself, of whatever variety. The history of democratic socialist movements in Western Europe illustrates one problem. Socialism appeals to the poor, the oppressed

6. Association of Community Organizations for Reform Now, Public Interest Research Groups, Exploratory Project for Economic Alternatives, Institute for Policy Studies, Union of Radical Political Economists.

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and the powerless, as well as to a small number of intellectuals who are motivated by abstract ideas of justice. Once a measure of affluence, power and security has been attained by the working class, socialism no longer retains much urgency (although party affiliations may remain). The small number of ideologues may still wish to eradicate a system that produces so much exploitation, environmental degradation and unjust reward and punishment, but they tend to lose their following.

This suggests some approaches for a renewal of socialism. First of all, socialism must broaden its scope and go beyond economic issues (whether producer or consumer oriented). Its domain must be all the socially induced causes of human misery. Socialists do not regard unemployment and poverty as unavoidable facts of nature. So also, loneliness, despair, disease, discrimination cause profound misery. It is obvious that many older people are so afflicted, but so also are middle-aged and younger people — the suicide rate among teenagers is not related to poverty. These sources of oppression are neither "natural" nor always traceable to capitalism. Socialists should be devising creative solutions and contemplating what changes in values and institutions may be needed to mitigate such afflictions. Included among these will be vast economic and political changes — the threat of nuclear annihilation is certainly a major oppression — but in addition all social institutions must come under scrutiny.

Just as there are "unnatural" causes of anguish, there may also be natural ones. Socialists must devote more attention to this distinction. They have never claimed to abolish death, but have generally ignored its place as an important human concern. Consolation and caring, within and without religious traditions, must finally be recognized by socialists. We may require opiates after all. Better those that do not produce the lonely destruction of the chemical kind. This leads to another precondition for renewal. Socialism must become relevant to people's daily lives. If one is not a party official, being a socialist, in most parts of the U.S., means little more than subscribing to a newsletter. Being a capitalist (ideologically speaking) means belonging to the Lions or Moose (Cubs for children), participating in United Fund drives and street fairs, belonging to the country club or fraternity, going to church, and, when all else fails, making contact with other human beings in shopping malls. Until socialist movements build their own communities and social institutions, being a socialist simply increases one's alienations, despair and loneliness. One must have a fierce sense of righteousness to withstand these for the sake of abstract ideas — and, in the process, to inflict this isolation on one's children. Socialism must take account of the yearning for the community, which may be more basic to humankind than the urge to manufacture.

These conjectures suggest that we might take another look at the earliest modern socialist tradition — utopianism. This derisory term was applied by Marx and Engels to suggest the superiority of their own theories. Why have so many — including non-Marxists — acceded to this arrogance? In fact, the so-called utopians were realistic and practical — as well as non-violent. The fruits of their theories were generally happier and more successful than those inspired by Marxism. A great flaw in the utopian tradition has been its frequent sacrifice of equality and liberty,as well as rationality, to the thrall of charismatic leaders. However, this problem is not unknown in other socialist traditions, and, once recognized, might well be avoidable.

The utopians are relevant today because they did confront a vast range of problems facing humankind (including ageism, sexism, and environmental degradation). Furthermore, utopian communities provide a locale in which people could live

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socialism and test and modify institutional arrangements, while attempting to convince or convert others. While quaint or disagreeable aspects of utopianism must be pruned, the tradition holds promise which the "populist", "revolutionary" or "Fabian" traditions lack. First of all, utopianism recognizes the need for "tribalism," or belongingness. Secondly, by attempting self-suffiency, socialist communities can reduce their dependence on third world imports and multinational corporations. Even "workers' control" would be more feasible in such an environment than in factories which are units of the "global marketplace." A radical change of life style is more appealing than mere economic tinkering added to the crumbling civilization of patriarchy, pollution and imperialism.

These reflections should not imply that the approach offered in *Economic Democracy* is not worthy of consideration. Perhaps some combination of populist and utopian orientations would be hopeful. For example, pension funds might be used to finance communites where "retired" as well as "active" people could find rest as well as work. To create an environment fit for humans in contrast to capitalist civilization may be an enormous challenge, but a worthy one.

One final note: The enormous research for *Economic Democracy* was supported largely by a grant from the Ford Foundation.

Joan Roelofs

Michael Wilding. *Political Fictions.* London, Boston and Henley: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1980. ix plus 266 pages. $25.00.

Wilding wants to accomplish three major things. Assuming, contra Lukacs, the exclusively bourgeois nature of literary realism, dismissing as reactionary avant-garde modernism like Joyce's, he wants to establish the radicalism of other forms, like the romance, the fable, and utopian fantasy; he tries to refute and supersede, from the left, Irving Howe's previous study of political fiction, *Politics and the Novel* (1957), which, according to Wilding, is Cold War propaganda and excessively concerned with ethics, which Wilding deems irrelevant to the more advanced perspective of scientific socialism; Wilding also wishes to retrieve for radicalism numerous texts that have been falsely appropriated by the established culture or incorrectly esteemed by the left as reactionary.

While these intentions are discernible, the book as a whole strikes me as poorly conceived for a number of reasons. Wilding clearly has methodological interests, but he refuses to articulate a thoroughly coherent alternative to his various opponents; he raises problems only to ignore them. Secondly, the choice of novels analyzed is difficult to understand and seems arbitrary: *Huckleberry Finn, News from Nowhere, The Iron Heel, The Rainbow, Kangaroo, Darkness at Noon,* and *1984.* Why *Huckleberry Finn* and not, say, a Howells novel or *Sister Carrie*? Why an American novel anyway, since most of the others are English? Whereas the utopian novels by Morris and London are understandably connected, as are the anti-communist novels of Koestler and Orwell, the excursion into Lawrence seems gratuitous. A more rigorous theoretical apparatus is necessary if these diverse texts are to be yoked together in some way, but like a New Critic, he claims he is only analyzing texts with the appropriate procedures and makes no larger claims, although in fact he does. The confusion is most clear in the Introduction, where he begins to construct a theoretical alternative but in the end decides not to (see especially the last paragraph).

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The reading of *Huckleberry Finn* pivots around an old critical chestnut, namely, the contrast between Tom Sawyer's mystifying and inhumane romanticism and the iconoclastic realism of Huck. Wilding claims elsewhere that the romance tradition is more "radical" than the realistic because the former provides images of what might be or ought to be, as opposed to mere reflections of a repressive reality (pp. 5-6). Tom Sawyer's romanticism, however, is an example of "pseudo-rebellion" which is "an important type for the political novel" (pp. 45-46). If Twain's novel is a political novel, then the genre must include most of the novels I can think of. What novel is not "political" in some way? No one can quarrel with elucidations of political content and meaning, but it is absurd to think of *the* political novel as a genre, at least as it is presented by Wilding. Howe's approach is much sounder: he merely suggests that novels which deal with politics are as worthy of interest as novels that deal with "private life" (Howe was trying to counteract the New Critical assumptions which banished politics outside the sphere of the truly literary). But, to get back to Twain's novel, Wilding has nothing new to offer. Indeed, from the quantity and quality of footnotes he cites in that chapter, I have to wonder if he has read the bulk of Twain criticism, especially of the last decade. Moreover, if Huck's realism in this instance is radical and not bourgeois, then the extravagant claims for romance must be revised far more than admitting the existence of a "pseudo-rebellion," an important aspect of a genre which in fact resides exclusively in Wilding's ideas.

The first chapter is flawed in other ways as well. The novelist, Mark Twain, is all but ignored; the specific cultural context, the history of the novel's reception, the trajectory of the literary criticism, are all ignored or grossly oversimplified. If he wants to save the novel as a "radical" text, he must show how — in specific terms — readers have appropriated it in other ways. Such is a worthwhile task; indeed, the process by which a novel as oppositional as Twain's become more or less domesticated (but not entirely: numerous critics have written on the novel's radical nature) is immensely important to analyze and understand. But to comprehend that process one must do much more hard work than Wilding has done, and the work must be historical, with a view to the actual interaction between text and readers, mediated of course by various hegemonic assumptions.

Morris' *News From Nowhere* is praised for its radicalism of form, but deprecated in comparison with London's *The Iron Heel,* which is not only more formally innovative but more uncompromisingly "radical" because London was working class and Morris was not. Here is an instance of Wilding's crude determinism, which leads to an equally undialectical voluntarism since if London is more radical because of his upbringing, then one would expect other proletarian writers to be just as radical — which they are not. How can one account, then, for Morris' radicalism, even if it is supposedly less revolutionary, since he was a bourgeois? Since Wilding ignores contextual issues such as the author's biography, intellectual development, and cultural milieu, one has to infer that radicalism is a product of will (but the will can work more efficiently, apparently, within a proletarian brain). In truth, however, contrary to Wilding's claims, neither novel is especially innovative as literature, and he strains to the point of absurdity in making his case. For example, the two chapters in Morris' novel where he dispenses with quotation marks in a dialogue over government and politics are instances of "specific avant-gardeism of formal self-consciousness and experimentation (p. 75). The footnotes in *The Iron Heel* are supposedly London's bold contribution to the novel as a form. After reading both chapters, I still think the two novels are, however interesting, ultimately unsuccessful; I would think twice before inflicting them on my students (I have taught *News From Nowhere* once, with predictable

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results: "it's boring"). Both novels fail because of their conventionality, their formal conservatism, their inability to become fresh narratives outside the limitations of the old romances and adventure stories they imitate. Although Wilding tries to develop a Marxist analysis of literary form, he does not even come close to arriving at the kind of insights someone like Fredric Jameson makes.

The chapters on Lawrence follow the established pattern. Ignoring Lawrence's life, cultural situation, other Lawrence novels' reception, Wilding "analyzes" the two novels which yield a "revolutionary" message. Lawrence was, according to Wilding, a proletarian revolutionary socialist, who has been grievously misunderstood by right and left alike, whose novels are radical in content and form. The quantity of Lawrence texts one must suppress in order to make this claim is staggering, yet Wilding waxes ecstatic over Lawrence's ultra-leftism. Critics on the left have been bothered by Lawrence's myth of nature and passion, since both seem to prefigure fascist irrationalism, especially his pronouncements on "blood-consciousness" and his consistent hostility towards democracy. Wilding, however, argues that Lawrence's anti-intellectualism is, if properly understood, a revolutionary negation of bourgeois consciousness. Echoing the most banal nonsense of the New Left at its worst, Wilding says: "The industrial system is a product of the intellect, of rationality; the structures of industrial technology and capitalist financing are worked out by intellect, not passion" (p. 134). He uses a contorted logic to excuse Lawrence's numerous attacks on democracy and equality as revolutionary defenses of the individual under attack by bourgeois civilization.

Wilding admits that Lawrence's attacks on capitalism are always emotional rather than reasoned, so he supplies the appropriate quotations from Marx, Engels and even the Great Helmsman himself (p. 168) to help us understand what Lawrence "really" meant. Even Lawrence's most mystical pronouncements concerning the blood consciousness are justified on grounds that are reminiscent of the New Left and counter-culture, at their most irrational moments: "there are other modes of perception than the intellectual-logical" (p. 146); "Ursula's intuitive, non-intellectual grasp of the sources of strength for the new society are manifestly proletarian" (p. 147); the revolutionary impetus will come from "non-intellectual forces" (p. 148). The real Lawrence, however, had a more complex view of industrial capitalism than its being simply the product of the intellect. Identifying the bourgeois world with reason, and the revolution with intuitive feeling is dangerous at best. One can understand why Blake and other left-romantics did precisely that, but presumably we have learned something in a century and a half. Salvaging Lawrence from Marxist moralism by turning him into a Maoist will hardly do.

As Ursula and the colliers are the revolutionary agents in *The Rainbow*, so the Australian proletariat is revolutionary in *Kangaroo*. Without irony or awareness of the political implications, Wilding can say something like this: "*Kangaroo* is concerned with abstaining from immediate commitments in order to make a commitment to the new revolution when the time comes — the revolution in consciousness outside existing structures. It may not be possible in western industrial society — the surface structures of habits of thought, limited mental consciousness, may be too rigid for the vertebral consciousness to break through. But possibly non-industrialized societies, without a history of alienation, of repression by the capitalist machine, will be readier for the apocalyptic moment" (p. 175). New Left Third-worldism is still alive, I am sorry to say. What happened to that faith in the noble savage who, uncontaminated with the West, would pave the way to a utopia of harmony, love, peace, community and emotional well-being? This myth of nature could not survive the recent turn of events

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in China, Kampuchea, Iran, not to mention Jonestown. Wilding, however, is upholding the faith, blissfully unconcerned with historical reality. The myth of nature dies hard.

Lawrence's irrationalism and Carlylean absurdities need to be understood within a useful context, such as Raymond Williams provides in *Culture and Society* (pp. 199-215). It is possible to understand sympathetically and historically the romantic myth of nature without also succumbing to it.

After the *Sturm und Drang* of the Lawrence chapters it is anti-climactic to come to the final two chapters on Koestler and Orwell. The only reason I can imagine Wilding chose to end the study this way is to counter Irving Howe, whose study also ends with these two authors. The chapters here are the best in the book — a statement that should not be confused with praise. Wilding correctly articulates the perverse logic by which a "Marxist" can justify the most horrendous acts: such indeed is the intention of Koestler in *Darkness at Noon*. And in the Orwell chapter, Wilding ably shows the various sources of *1984*. What needs comment, however, is the author's approach to Stalinism and Communism. The two chapters are rather cagey, but I think Wilding is suggesting that the true revolutionary position on ethics and democracy is one of political expediency. Apropos *Darkness at Noon*, he says: "Both the church and the party have the same disregard of mere truth, something that is shocking to the ideology of liberal humanism, something utterly at odds with the official ethical theory of bourgeois democratic society" (p. 195). I would think a disregard for the truth to promote institutional goals is simply shocking and indefensible, period. That truth-telling is the official ethical position and practice of the bourgeoisie will come as a big surprise to those in the board rooms of the multinational conglomerates and their political allies.

Darkness at Noon is a great novel, a powerful exploration of the Stalinist mentality, but the parts that are moving to me strike Wilding as "sentimental vignettes" and "individualistic tear-jerking episodes" (p. 197). Note his inconsistency: it was good for Lawrence to defend the individual at the expense of democracy, while individualism in a communist context is ridiculed. I must be one of that sorry crew of "bourgeois individualist readers." Were I not so burdened with a "bourgeois conscience," I would see, as Wilding does, that the "Marxist dialectic" impels Rubashov to confess, thereby disclosing important information concerning the Marxist dialectic (p. 203). Stalinist lies are terrible only to "the assumptions of the liberal ethics of bourgeois democracy" (p. 205), not to revolutionaries, who can wield the dialectic with karate-like precision. Rubashov, then, by confessing to crimes he never committed, he is actually being Marxist and dialectical. He is excusing a repressive regime whose repression is necessary: after all, Russia is a "backward country" in need of rapid industrial development, and is moreover encircled by capitalist countries. While most readers are horrified by Rubashov's capitulation to his persecutors, Wilding comes to Rubashov's defense, assuring him that his logic is correct.

Howe used the political literature to illustrate in part the inadequacies of political life, whose degeneration had reached crisis proportions with Stalinism. But the closest Wilding gets to a negative comment on Stalinism is on page 245, where English socialists are said to have been foolishly blind to the realities of Stalinism. Wilding's view of totalitarianism is at best ambiguous: "The political novel has moved from its preoccupation with the problems of bourgeois democracy to exploring totalitarian societies. Yet it would be hard to assess whether overall there was more totalitarianism in the 20th century than in the 19th century. This preoccupation with totalitarian systems is predominantly the work of opponents of the Soviet Union" (p. 193). The

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totalitarian thesis was formulated precisely to explain the *unprecedented* tyranny practiced by Hitler and Stalin. Not to accept the novelty of Stalinist oppression and the Third Reich is in fact to excuse those regimes. He writes as though a critique of totalitarianism is ideological, when in fact it is an attempt to comprehend one of the worst tendencies of the 20th century. As Jeane Kirkpatrick uses "totalitarianism" to excuse the terrorism of the capitalist right-wing regimes, so Wilding dismisses totalitarianism, excusing communist terror. If *Political Fictions* is reminscent of vintage New Leftism, it also has affinities with vintage Stalinism. Wilding's "left" supersession of Howe's democratic socialist perspective, then, turns out to be, as is so often the case, Marxist-Leninism, in this instance jazzed up with some New Left romanticism.

Whereas Howe's book was an important statement against both New Critical rigidities and Stalinist totalitarianism, Wilding's does little more than reflect a political and cultural confusion. He wants to be ultra-revolutionary, so he turns to the romance, the utopian fantasy, and nature, where he presumes "negativity" resides. The romance, however, is a contradictory genre, from its inception to its contemporary existence as mass-produced drug-store paperbacks.[1] The utopian fantasy, although it has provided emancipatory images of what might be, has also a long, undeniable legacy of authoritarianism. To dismiss the rich oppositional heritage of the realist tradition is as preposterous as dismissing the avant-garde modernism; each literary tendency is *both* importantly critical while incomplete in its rebellion. While these flaws in Wilding's approach are lapses in judgment, his politics, as they emerge in the book, are less easy to forgive.

Michael Scrivener

1. For the early romance, see Fredric Jameson, "Magical Narratives: Romance as Genre," *New Literary History*, 7:1 (Fall 1975), pp. 135-163; for contemporary romances, see Kate Ellis, "Women Read Romances That Fit Changing Times," *In These Times*, Feb. 7-13, 1979.
2. See, for example, Marie Louise Berneri, *Journey Through Utopia* (1950).

Stanley Moore. *Marx on the Choice between Socialism and Communism.* Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1980.

Moore's new book on Marx is a critical analysis of the Marxist orthodoxy on the transition from a lower to a higher stage of communism. In his view, no part of Marxist theory has failed more decisively than its account of the transition from socialism to communism. The dogma that socialism must be the prelude to communism serves to justify repressive features of societies under communist rule. A communist economy is incompatible with a complex culture. The goal of establishing such an economy is therefore incompatible with the goal of creating a social order where the free development of each is conditioned by the free development of all (p. viii). Why then did Marx believe that communism was superior to socialism? The answer cannot be found in Marx, but in the particular circumstances of Marx's intellectual history. According to Moore, Marx adopted communism as a goal on philosophical grounds, before he developed historical materialism, and could not resolve apparent conflicts between the two. "After the *Manifesto*, and to a greater degree after *Capital*, communism became... a goal he was unwilling to abandon but unable to defend" (p. 89).

Moore's analysis does not seem to differ much from that of other revisionists. But what distinguishes his analysis is its lucidity in dispelling the obscurity of Marx's reasoning on his preference of communism over socialism. Moore finds the root of Marx's problem in the influence of philosophical communism and of Hegel's

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philosophy on the young Marx. Marx's characterization of man as a species being is of Feuerbachean origin, and his call for a return from *Gesellschaft* to *Gemeinschaft* is based on the philosophical communists' conviction that the transcendence of alienation becomes possible only with the abolition of exchange as well as exploitation. Marx never abandoned the idea of community as the key to the solution of dehumanizing capitalist society. A rebirth of community remained the ultimate goal. Like philosophical communists, he believed that ending exploitation is not sufficient to end estrangement.

Marx's theoretical development comes to a turning point with *The German Ideology*. As he develops his principles of historical materialism, he rejects the premises of philosophical communism. But Moore argues that this break from his former philosophical convictions was not as radical as Marx believed. He retained the conclusions of philosophical communism. "To the extent this attempt to derive old conclusions from new premises was unsuccessful, the conflict between philosophical communism and historical materialism in his earlier work was not resolved but intensified" (p. 19). In order to fuse labor and enjoyment in free activity, Marx argues, the forces of production must attain a higher level of development. But according to Marx's own account of social evolution, the material basis for creating the world of wealth and culture has been the development of division of labor and commodity exchange. Moore argues: "The moral desirability of abolishing these institutions follows from the premises of philosophical communism. But its practical infeasibility seems to follow from the premises of historical materialism" (p. 25). Ending specialization and making occupation a matter of individual choice in an economy complex enough to sustain wealth and culture would render exchange more necessary than before (p. 26).

Despite these obvious difficulties, Marx believed in the superiority of communism as an ideal of distributive justice over socialist distribution as a system of equal right which is, like every right, one of inequality because it provides equal incomes for unequal needs. Marx's remedy for these defects of socialism is communism, where consumer goods are free. Moore traces Marx's critical evaluation of socialism back to a highly abstract traditional argument that all institutions are inequitable to the extent that they operate through general rules — an argument first formulated in Plato's *Statesman*. Moore challenges: "Suppose we accept the contention that no system of general rules can consider all aspects in which individuals differ from one another. Must we then agree that any such system is unfair?.... Does not equity or fairness always involve treating some differences as grounds for different treatment, while deliberatley ignoring all the rest?" (p. 49). Moore finds two clues for Marx's inconclusive reasoning in Hegel's *Logic* and *Philosophy of Right*.

One clue is the distinctively Hegelian character of Marx's reasoning. His critique of bourgeois right closely parallels the section on "Identity and Difference" in Hegel's *Logic*. The other clue is an inconsistency in Marx's account of the connection between right and general rules. Marx asserts that all right by its nature involves applying the same standard to different cases. Yet, he denies that this is true of communist right. Marx seems stuck with the paradox that a certain kind of right is free from the defects of all right (pp. 49-50). Moore pinpoints that Marx's comparison of socialist and communist right is based on Paragraphs 29 and 30 of Hegel's *Philosophy of Right*, where Hegel attacks as formalistic the ordinary conception of right as a system of general rules, referring for support to the critique of abstract identity presented in his *Logic*. Hegel's own conception of right as an embodiment of freedom includes not only general rules but also those patterns of solidarity that characterize such communities

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as family and what he calls political state (p. 50). When Marx states that all rights share the abstract character of bourgeois rights, he has in mind the ordinary conception of rights. When he states that communists rights are free from the limitations of bourgeois rights, he has in mind Hegel's higher level of rights. Though the inconsistency is not removed, it is explained (p. 51). It is unfortunate that Moore does not pursue this issue further.

He concludes: "If in every complex economy a labor market is required for translating concrete into abstract labor, the communist economy that Marx predicts is not simply remote but unattainable" (p. 75). He is right.

Sang-Ki Kim

Daniel Singer. *The Road to Gdansk.* New York: Monthly Review Press, 1981.

This is a fascinating book, full of information, written with talent, passion, involvement. The titles implies an evolution — of the situation and-or of the argument: a road to..., a continuity. The book does and does not fulfill this expectation. Composed of three separate parts — on Solzhenitsyn, the USSR, and Poland — it seems to deal with different problems in different ways, applying different methods and addressing different readerships. The essay on Solzhenitsyn is a passionate defense of the man, the witness, but also an explanation and accusation of his limits as a product of Soviet degeneration. (It reminds me of a beautiful short article with which Rossana Rossanda welcomed Solzhenitsyn to the West in the pages of *Il Manifesto:* "un uomo solo.") Singer's essay is written principally for the Western Left.

The part on the Soviet Union is a sample of a kind of Western leftist Kremlinology; a rather scholarly analysis of the changing and non-changing leadership, reflections on the composition of power, and a survey of the potential conflicts in the ruling elite. The essay on Poland, certainly the best in the book, is an expression of hope — and a prophetic one, since the book was written before August 1980. It is also an excellent journalistic account of the facts, which Singer links together clearly within an analysis of the historical trends of the past decade. At the same time, some of his theoretical assumptions, beliefs and hopes create a *leitmotif* for the whole book, giving it a continuity, making it a "road to..." As a socialist he is "reluctant to accept that the changes embodied in the October Revolution ultimately lead to a dead end" (p. 13). He accuses the Western proletariat and Social Democracy of having betrayed the Bolsheviks some sixty years ago. But unlike Isaac Deutscher, Singer does not attribute to this the entire Stalinist degeneration. Rather, he sees the whole Socialist bloc in terms of contradictions deepening over the years, increasing internal and external pressures for change, and, as a result, growing opposition.

For Singer, this opposition is, or may be, socialist. He recognizes diverse conflicts, national, religious, and so on, but claims that they have to lead to the revival of the labor movement. This is, he says, "the most likely prospect and it has my preference" (p. 15). That is why Gdansk is a kind of embodiment of the Marxist dream; why everything else flows into the "road to Gdansk." The account of Gierek's decade is one of the best available. Singer's language is rich, full of metaphors, some ironic, others simply sharp. His book on Eastern Europe is also about the Western Left, its hopes, utopias, and disappointments; its enthusiasms and indignations; its closing its eyes in illusion asnd being forced to open them in disenchantment.

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In his description of Soviet political evolution after Stalin, Singer underlines the continuity of the "stink." He portrays the Brezhnev period correctly as Stalinism minus terror. But this sort of continuity and the stability of legitimation is as obvious as it is true. Given the absence of any representative system, the only legitimation of power in the socialist societies is the ideological one. The ruling party proclaims itself the embodiment of the true interests and desires of the working masses. In this system, even the most violent changes in leadership do not undermine legitimacy so long as its ideological bases remain safe. The stability and continuity of legitimacy would be interrupted only if the ruling party itself were to announce that, while it no longer represented popular interests, it was retaining power simply because it liked it. Singer will admit that this is not very likely even in a situation such as Poland's today, where the impossible is an everyday fact. The rulers are obviously concerned more with preserving the continuity of legitimacy than with anything else. This is why in Poland today as in Czechoslovakia thirteen years ago the Soviets are closely watching the rebellion and changes within the party; and it is why only a real interruption of legitimation may provoke a military invasion. So, in correctly observing such continuity, Singer is observing an obvious phenomenon, while leaving open the meaning of the changes.

The second problem in his account is the peasantry. Like many other Marxists, Singer does not like peasants. He considers them backward, unable to "benefit from the advantages of scale and the facilities to extract surpluses that the Soviet model provides" (p. 189). Rather than deal with what he terms the "anomaly" of the peasantry, Singer places his hopes in industrialization. But the facts are that Polish peasants could never gain advantage from the Soviet model, and the economy of scale obviously does not apply to the Polish situation, where productivity on large, state-owned farms is even lower than on private plots. Part of the "anomaly" now is that Polish peasants are fighting for freedom and equality. And they are not, or at least not only, driven by the movement of industrial workers. Equality has always been an old peasant slogan.

The second and for Singer even more striking "anomaly" in the Polish situation is "the spiritual hold and political power of the Catholic church" (p. 190). In his implicit polemic with Adam Michnik, Singer actually underestimates the role of the Polish church, its specificity, its independent power. One can share Singer's aversion to crosses, but not his simplistic judgment that "in the long run, the ideological hegemony of the Catholic church casts a shadow over Poland's evolution in a progressive direction" (p. 193). Whatever the origins of the church's and the Catholic religion's strength in Polasnd, it is firmly grounded in popular, mass support. For the opposition, dealing with this whole matter is not a merely tactical problem.

Singer discusses two "anomalies" but he disregards two others: freedom and nationalism. Is a demand for freedom raised only by a bunch of intellectuals? Are Polish, Soviet, or Czechoslovak societies insensitive to political slavery or eager to accept it? Isn't the thirst for freedom in these societies perceived by the powers that be as the greatest danger? Let us simply observe the rage, fear and overreaction of the whole Soviet leadership when it moves an enormous repressive machinery to deal with apparently isolated voices such as Solzhenitsyn's or Sakharov's. The fact that a tight monopoly over the means of information constitutes a condition *sine qua non* of the political and economic tyranny is more than obvious, but it also proves to be a real weakness of this tyranny. Singer himself describes the East European and Polish working classes as numerous, educated, and so on. The recent Polish events show that the working class understands perfectly the connection between the repressive system

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as a whole and restrictions imposed on speech and print. Political freedom, however formulated, holds an extremely important place on the list of workers' demands.

Similarly, Singer ignores the problem of nationalism. To anyone coming from Poland, such an omission recalls Rosa Luxemburg's arguments on the Polish national question prior to World War I, when she claimed that there was no social class in Poland interested in the existence of an independent nation. All the major classes, she contended — peasantry, workers, bourgeoisie — could only lose in the nationalistic struggle. A few years later, the Polish national state was born, proving, as Kolakowski reminds us, how correct Pilsudski was in boasting about never being able to finish even the first volume of *Capital*.

Singer's omissions are consistent with his assumptions. He rightly notices that in the last 60 years a demographic revolution has taken place in the USSR and East Europe. Growing industrialization and urbanization increased not only the numbers of the working class but very definitely its level of education as well. The more the working class adapts itself to industrial life, educates itself, and sees new possibilities open before it, the more it is able to generate class consciousness and oppose exploitation. But Singer would like the proletariat to be all or nothing, which is why he considers anomalous everything that does not fit into the image of proletarian consciousness. Reality offers something else: the development of diverse interests, aspirations, conflicts. A similarly complex mix is probably at the origins of all social revolutions. In an explosive situation, as we know from Lenin, there is always a leading conflict or demand which, in the social perception, unifies the other demands, hopes, and conflicts, creating the characteristic illusion of actual unity. In Poland at this moment such a central demand is the one for independence, for self-government. In the USSR, the role of key conflict or demand may very well be played by the national questions. But Singer is reluctant to admit this, which is probably why, in his chapter on the Soviet Union, he places such emphasis on conflicts in the ruling elite, calculating ages, comparative advantages, and speculating on contradictions between technocrats and bureaucrats.

Conflicts within the elite can bring about temporary weakness or even disintegration of the machinery of power, and they can, as it happened, induce the expression of other demands and conflicts. But in his discussion of the Soviet case, Singer exaggerates the importance of conflicts within the *nomenklatura,* underestimating a general sense of unrest and rebellion. He is right that the likelihood of the oppressed rising against their situation depends partially on the actual cohesiveness of the ruling apparatus. But this does not imply that, in periods when power is relatively stable, the consciousness of exploitation or oppression ceases to exist.

Another of Singer's sins, one he himself recognizes, is his wishful thinking. The USSR degenerated because of the failure of the world proletariat. The Marxist background of some KOR members is emphasized, even though this really does not matter in the present political moment. Daniel praises Kuron's and Modzelewski's political maturity in comparison to their naive *Open Letter to the Party* of 1964. Similarly, he presents the Cegielski plant in Poznan as a proletarian fortress, while it might just as well be considered a Christian-Democratic one — given the weak tradition of class struggle in Poznan.

In other words, the struggle in East Europe is for true socialism, for going back to its virgin form before the Stalinist rape and Social Democracy's betrayal. All the rest constitutes a potential danger, maybe of a return to capitalism or, in the best of cases, an "anomaly." But what is needed in Eastern Europe is hardly a return, social, economic, or otherwise, to capitalism. What is needed is national sovereignty,

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freedom of association, organization, unionizing; freedom of speech, political pluralism, control over the means of production and distribution; popular control over public institutions, an abolition of the repressive police regime. And more: freedom to eat, to live in a house, freedom for individual expression, for human dignity. All these are suppressed by the totalitarian system. Of course, the ruling apparatus' monopoly of political power is guaranteed by its position as the sole distributor of the social product. That is why an attack on exploitation is *ipso facto* an attack on the political basis of the totalitarian system. But potentially such an attack can be expressed by the explosion of other conflicts. I suspect that as long as we refuse to analyze the totalitarian system as such, we will continue to divide contradictions and rebellions into good ones and bad ones, granting to only one group, class or idea (proletariat, soul, religion, nation) an exclusive right to express the leading conflict.

Marta Petrusevicz

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Gerold Prauss Time, Space, and Schematism
Comments by Judson Webb
D.P. Dryer The Transcendental Deduction Rescrutinized
Comments by Robert Paul Wolff
Rolf-Peter Horstmann The Metaphysical Deduction in Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason*
Comments by Stephan Körner
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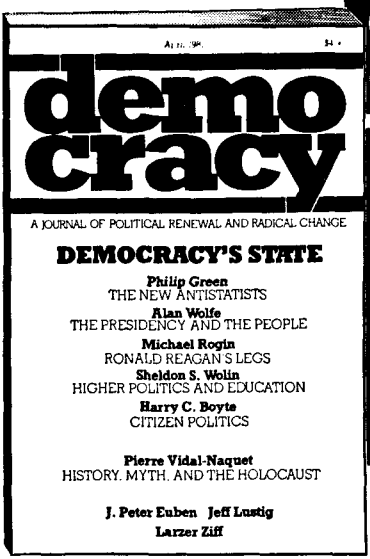

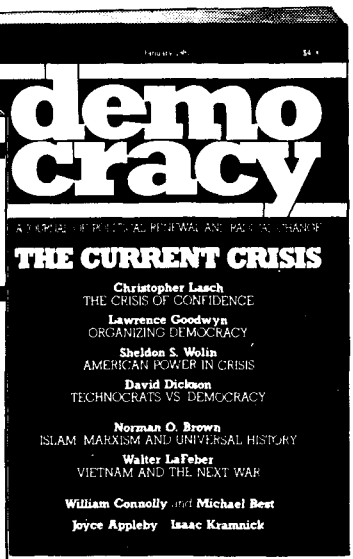

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SHORT JOURNAL REVIEWS:*

GEGENSTIMMEN, 3 (January-March 1981)

Sozialistisches Osteuropakomitee, P.O. Box 41, Vienna 1033, Austria. Annual subscription (international): OeS 120. In its platform, *Gegenstimmen* recognizes the growing interest of Western Marxists in the campaigns for democratic rights in Eastern Europe and the significance of anti-bureaucratic movements. It concentrates on the dissemination of information, reprints of Eastern European material and reports of oppositional activities. In this issue: H. LJUNG, I. PALME, *"Solidarität heute — Erfolg morgen!"* A report on a visit to Poland by these editorial members who met with strike committees, students and feminists in Warsaw, Katowice and Crakow in December 1980. It describes union activities and related, semi-legal newspapers. HANS LJUNGE, *"Studenten organisieren sich."* Describes the program and structure of the new Polish student organization, Niezaleznege Zrzeszenia Studentow, as part of the general development of oppositional structures. IMMA PALME, *"Polnische Feministinnen."* Reports on meeting with Polish feminists and a reprint of their program. HANS H. HUECKING *"Die katholische Kirche in Polen."* The ambivalent role of the church as an undemocratic structure within a democratic movement. LECH WALESA, ET AL., *"Die Solidarinosc und das KOR."* A reprint of an interview from the Polish journal CSAS on the relationship of the Solidarity union movements to the oppositional "Committee for Social Self-Defense" (KOR). MERAKLIA, *"Bulgarien — das Taiwan Osteuropas."* Reprinted from "Istok," an East European anarcho-syndicalist journal. The second issue appeared in France, published by the "Union des Anarchistes Bulgares." This short essay, which appears in English translation in this issue of *Telos*, describes the crisis of Bulgarian society, suffering from Western economic pressures and the symbols of consumer society. Meanwhile, the regime apparently attempts to stabilize the situation by appealing to nationalism, racism and spiritualism. *"Unruhen in Estland."* A short report on strikes and youth uprisings in Estonia, especially in Tallinn, Tartu and Parnu, and a description of the effects of Russification in the universities. *"Offener Brief aus dem Gefängnis von Valerij Abramkin."* From *Poiski*, 2. *"Selbstverwaltete Repression."* The economic crisis in Yugoslavia and the development of political conflicts, especially in the wake of Tito's death. The party's attacks on Milovan Djilas as a "left-fascist." *"Zu Ungarn ist alles eine Lüge."* An interview with the unemployed sociologists Zoltan Zsille and Anna Balajthy on the situation in Hungary and the apparent absence of parallel moments to those in Poland. Despite working class opposition to bureaucracy at the point of production (absenteeism, sabotage), no organized resistance has developed, which is attributed in part to the specific status of intellectuals in Hungary. Also in this issue are various other reports, especially on Romania and Czechoslovakia. RAB

THE INSURGENT SOCIOLOGIST, 10:1 (Summer 1980)

Dept. of Sociology, University of Oregon, Eugene, OR 97403. Sustaining: $25; regular: $12; low income: $8. Institutions pay $20 per year. VINCENTE NAVARRO, *"The Nature of Democracy in the Core Capitalist Countries: Meanings and Implications for Class Struggle."* Argues that class struggle must take place simultaneously within the economic and political order. Full democracy and capitalism are not compatible because of the separation between these two spheres. Commitment to democracy must begin in the workplace and must extend to the household and all areas of life. For full democracy to materialize, the represented must also be the representatives. The struggle for democracy and socialism are one and the same thing. DOLORES JANIESKI, *"Women and the Making of a Rural Proletariat in the Bright Tobacco Belt, 1880-1930."* Explains race and sex as a basis for class domination in the tobacco farming industry where females occupied a subordinate position and black females, the lowest social rank. Both men and women valued "men's work" more highly. Women were forced to be dependent upon men for sustenance as discriminatory wage pricing held their wages to almost half that of their male counterparts. ERIC CHESTER, *"Electoral Systems and Political Parties."* Chester refutes Duverger's idea that the electoral system in the United States has led to a two-party system and inhibits the development of a powerful third political party. Chester cites examples supporting his refutation from Canada, New Zealand, and Britain and concludes that the working class, as a result of dissatisfaction with the political situation, may indeed form a third party. He asserts that the major reason for a two-party system in the United States is its enduring political stability. WALDA KATZ FISHMAN, JAN M. FRITZ, *"The Politics of Sociobiology."* A

*This section has been compiled by John Fekete, Department of English Literature, Trent University, Peterborough, Ontario, Canada K9J 7B8. The following have contributed reviews: John Fekete, Pamela McCallum, Peter Murphy, Odessa Pierce, Harland Prechel, Robert E. Rucker, Rachell Scharff.

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critique of the most recent ideas on sociobiology is presented. The author takes the position that science, and in particular sociobiology, is used in political and economic domination by one class against another. The authors criticize sociobiologists for ignoring data contradictory to their ideas and explore the implications of uncritical acceptance of sociobiology. KENNETH FONES WOLFE, *"Class, Professionalism and the Early Bureaus of Labor Statistics."* The author argues that bureaus of labor have been instrumental in neutralizing any power the working class may have gained through the use of labor bureaus. JANET SCHMIDT, *"Workers' Compensation: The Articulation of Class Relations in Law."* The author examines the process whereby laws of employer liability and workers' compensation were developed. The author asserts that workers' compensation was an attempt in the 19th century to resolve conflict between workers and industrialists over the safety of the workplace and the plight of injured workers. This, however, reflected the fundamental contradiction between labor and capital derived from the political-economic structure of capital accumulation. Plus book reviews. RS

MARXIST PERSPECTIVES, 3:2 (Summer 1980)

The Cliomar Corp., 420 West End Avenue, New York, NY 10024. $18 per year (4 issues). LAWRENCE GOODWYN, *"The Cooperative Commonwealth and Other Abstractions: In Search of a Democratic Premise."* Analyzes the historical relationship of populism to socialism, and the question of democracy within movements for social change. ALAN M. WALD, *"From Antinomianism to Revolutionary Marxism: John Wheelwright and the New England Rebel Tradition."* Wald gives an account of Wheelwright's art and politics. *"Pantoum."* A poem by Armand Schwerner. C.H. GEORGE, *"The Origins of Capitalism: A Marxist Epitome and a Critique of Immanuel Wallerstein's Modern World System."* MICHAEL GREENBERG, *"Revival, Reform, Revolution."* Offers a study of Samuel Davies and the Great Awakening to explore the relationship of religious to political radicalism. JOEL AGEE, *"A Memoir of a Childhood in the German Democratic Republic."* Agee recalls his boyhood adventures and offers an account of the reception of the news of the death of Josef Stalin. DAVID IGNATOW, *"Say."* A poem. STANLEY B. RYERSON, *"The Canada-Quebec Conundrum."* Sketches the evolution of the crisis and offers a critique of the left-wing response to it. J.M. PORTER, *"Eric Vögelin's Philosophy of History and Consciousness."* Provides a critical introduction to the work of a political theorist and philosopher of history. JOHN WOMACK JR., *"Mariategui, Marxism and Nationalism."* Reviews Chavarria's study of Mariategui and the problem of nationalism in Marxist movements. OP

NEW LEFT REVIEW, 122 (1980)

7 Carlisle Street, London W1V 6NL, England. $20 per year (6 issues). HARALD JUNG, *"Class Struggles in El Salvador."* Jung provides a brief, enlightening historical account of the oppressive political, economic and military controls in El Salvador supported by U.S. military and economic aid and confronted by a mounting array of popular forces including trade union federations, political parties, and numerous peasant and student organizations. He argues that the revolutionary forces in El Salvador are much more organized than they were in Nicaragua prior to Somoza's overthrow, and this circumstance, combined with continued U.S. military support of the existing regime, makes a civil war more likely than a swift repetition of Somoza's overthrow. ADAM PRZEWORSKI, *"Social Democracy as a Historical Phenomenon."* The author argues that the electoralist orientation of social democracy results in a sacrifice of workplace organization and an appeal to a broad popular constituency occurs at the expense of a class-based political foundation. GREGOR BENTON, *"China's Oppositions."* Chinese Communism is typified by varieties of political experimentation followed by reimposition of bureaucratic control. Current aspects of Peking's politics include an extremely reactionary foreign policy, anti-Sovietism, and alignment with far-right imperialist policies. During 1979, a series of oppositions emerged against these current political policies; Benton surveys these new oppositions and compares them with previous oppositional movements in the history of Chinese revolution. Reviews: ELIZABETH WILSON, *"Marxism and the 'Welfare State.'"* Review of Ian Gough's *The Political Economy of the Welfare State.* JOHN GOODE, review of Francis Mulhern, *The Moment of Scrutiny.* HP

NEW LITERARY HISTORY, 6:3 (Spring 1980)

Johns Hopkins University Press, Baltimore, MD 21218. $11 for 3 issues. Issue theme: On Narrative and Narratives. CLAUDE BREMOND, *"The Logic of Narrative Possibilities."* Translation of a 1966 article that attempts to develop Propp in order to map out the logical possibilities of narrative in triadic sequences. Plus a 1980 postface which refines, but does not

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substantially alter, his original arguments. MICHAEL HOLQUIST, WALTER REED, *"Six Theses on the Novel — And Some Metaphors."* Traditional criticism has treated novels as an inferior genre, while structuralism has imposed extrinsic systems on the novel form. The novel genre must be analyzed in relation to, first, its critique of literature as an institution, and, second, its opposition to "system" as a mode of thought. FELIX MARTINEZ-BONATI, *"The Act of Writing Fiction."* The novel demands a reflective estrangement because its point of view conveys "direct, immediate perception of events by a stranger to them, while the nature of events in a novel is private." LUCIEN DALLENBACH, *"Reflexivity and Reading."* Saussurian structuralism cannot deal with problems of reception and reading. The text's indeterminacy, its doublings (*mise* en *abyme*) authorize and call for the reader's creative activity. ANNETTE KOLODNY, *"A Map for Rereading: Or, Gender and the Interpretation of Literary Texts."* Bloom's 'anxiety of influence,' the learned, historically determined and necessarily gender-inflected quality in interpretive strategies of reading. Women's writing, in particular, shows the writer's sense of exclusion from cultural tradition. ALEXANDER GELLEY, *"Metonymy, Schematism, and the Space of Literature."* "In pointing to the spatiality at work at various levels of the literary text, much contemporary criticism tends to mime rather than analyze the spatial metaphors." The article attempts to supersede this impasse, using the work of Cassirer. VICTOR BROMBERT, *"Opening Signals in Narrative."* Narrative structures tend to undermine their temporal narrativity in order to create self-referential structures. "The narrator becomes the reader." PETER BROOKS, *"Repetition, Repression and Return: Great Expectations and the Study of Plot."* An analysis of *Great Expectations* using Freud's *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* to argue that narrative both seeks and delays its end (closure). CLAUDE DUVERLIE, *"Beyond the Image: An Interview with Alain Robbe-Grillet."* Robbe-Grillet discusses the visual images in his recent work for which he claims an arbitrariness. STEPHEN G. NICHOLS JR., *"The Light of the Word: Narrative, Image and Truth."* With illustrations from the Romanesque period, Nichols argues that images should not mirror, but rather elaborate the narrative. RICHARD HARVEY BROWN, *"The Position of Narrative in Contemporary Society."* The traditional narrative which unfolds action through time needs a social order with meaning, political economy and collective psychology. Such conditions no longer exist and have contributed to the erosion of traditional narrative. Plus summarizing commentaries by Jerome Beaty and Angel Medina and some responses by authors. PM

NEW POLITICAL SCIENCE, 1:4 (Fall 1981)

Caucus for a New Political Science, Columbia University, West 118th Street, Room 733, New York, NY 10027. NANCY HARTSOCK, *"Sexuality and Power: Domination or Liberation."* A condensation from her book, *Money, Sex and Power: An Essay on Domination and Community*, that attempts to synthesize the insight shared by feminism and Marxism that human beings are not bifurcated, interest-driven individuals. Begins with "an account of sexuality-power in the phallocentric form sensuality-death, and [goes on to] uncover-unpack the understanding of sensuality implied in this linkage." Alternative understandings leading toward life rather than death are then explored. STANLEY ARONOWITZ, *"Anti-Oedipus and Molecular Politics."* An extensive review of Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*. BARBARA EPSTEIN, *"Thoughts on Socialist Feminism in 1980."* Examines the declining influence of a leftist or socialist focus in contemporary feminism. In the late 1960s and early 1970s, the tone of feminism was predominantly radical and visionary but by 1980 the women's movement had become more defensive. How liberal feminism in the guise of NOW has gained control, and what specific historical and political circumstances have allowed for this development, are carefully analyzed. ANDREA DWORKIN, *"Beaver and Male Power in Pornography."* Analyses a specific photograph of female bondage and degradation to make the point that "male power is the raison d'être of pornography; the degradation of the female is the means of achieving this power." PADDY QUICK, *"Why Women Work for Wages."* Examines some of the interpretations of both traditional economists and of Marxists of why, in the last 30 years, more and more women have become involved in work outside the home, either as job holders or job seekers. An alternative thesis, based on a general analysis of the economic struggle between the capitalist class and the working class, is presented. For one thing, this increase of women in the work force reflects the increasing displacement of production within the home by capitalist commodity production. ELLEN WILLIS, *"The Family: Love It or Leave It."* Originally published in the *Village Voice* (September 17, 1979), this personal recollection of one woman's experiences in and out of families and other living situations highlights the influences on her development as a radical feminist. Responding to recent works such as Lasch's *Culture of Narcissism* and to the more established radical Freudians like Goodman and Marcuse, she

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maintains that the final issue to be considered is whether we have the right to hope for a freer, more humane way of connecting with each other than the traditional nuclear family. PFM

RADICAL AMERICA, 14:5 (September-October 1980)

38 Union Square, Somerville, MA 02143. $10 for six issues. DICK CLUSTER, *"Lessons from the Sixties."* LESLIE CAGAN, *"Women and the Anti-Draft Movement."* FRANK BRODHEAD, *"The Anti-Draft Movement Today."* A series of articles addressing the return of the draft and the recent organizing against it. The first summarizes the experience and history of the anti-draft movement during the Vietnam War, providing a basis of comparison for those organizing today's opposition. The second emphasizes the importance of feminism and the women's movement to the recent revival of the anti-draft movement. The third is an overview of the opposition movement, especially in Massachusetts, and the dynamics of the government's actions, aspirations, and failures. The potential for this small movement to grow into an intensive grassroots campaign of peace education is stressed. SHERRY GORELICK, *"City College: Rise and Fall of the Free Academy."* A history of the City University of New York and the struggles of its 129 years of free higher education. Originating as the Free Academy for males in 1847, and joined by Hunter College in 1870, it has continually experienced demonstrations and turbulence over free tuition and open admissions. The current fight to retain access to quality education for working class and minority youth is examined. JENNIFER ROSE, *"Watch City."* A poem. LINDA HUNT, *"Books about Women's Lives: The New Best Sellers."* Extensive review of Friday's *My Mother, My Self* and French's *The Women's Room*. STEVEN CAGAN, *"Documentary Photography in Cuba."* A selection of photographs from several of the leaders in contemporary Cuban documentary photography. A brief introduction provides a historical context for the development of this art form since its inception in 1959. RON SCHREIBER, *"The Public Stammer"* and *"They Kill Us."* Two poems. PHILIP MATTERA, *"Small is not Beautiful: Decentralized Production and the Underground Economy in Italy."* Examines the new entrepreneurship as a spirit of enterprise among small businessmen seeking an alternative to flacid state-run industries and large corporations. This recent upsurge is seen as primarily a side effect of a complicated restructuring of the whole of Italian industry which includes such giants as Fiat and Olivetti. Characterized by productive decentralization (i.e., "the removal of more and more aspects of production from the large factories to much smaller plants and even to the home"), the process is perceived as an emerging trend throughout the rest of the capitalist world. PFM

RADICAL AMERICA, 14:6 (November-December 1980)

PAT BRYANT, *"Justice vs. the Movement."* Originally published in the summer issue of *Southern Exposure,* this expose of the Community Relations Service of the Justice Department examines its role in monitoring civil rights violations and its implications for anti-racist struggles against the rise of the New Conservatism, especially the Ku Klux Klan. Though described as aiming at diffusing racial tensions, the CRS is primarily aimed at "dividing progressive forces and channeling public anger into relying on government intervention rather than grassroots organizing." ANDY ROWLAND, *"Tanning Leather, Tanning Hides: Health and Safety Struggles in a Leather Factory."* A portrait of life in a leather tannery by a safety researcher who worked there for six months rewriting safety codes and developing a questionnaire to convince the Occupational Safety and Health Administration that the workers had been trained in safety procedures. In detailing the struggle for health and safety, the importance of direct action in enforcing the right of workers to a safe workplace is emphasized. "Current struggles to create active union safety committees with the right to shut down dangerous work" is a "small but significant step in the long journey toward a demographic workplace." ELAYNE RAPPING, *"Tupperware and Women."* The Tupperware phenomenon is examined to provide insights into an aspect of working class housewives' lives for those concerned with organizing women in the community. Beginning with the aspects most directly affecting the women themselves (the parties, social networks, family involvements, and work experiences), the article goes on to discuss the particular organizational and ideological components making Tupperware such a huge success and linking it to the political right. Concluding remarks draw parallels with feminist forms of community organizing and suggest the extent to which the Tupperware network is accessible to left organizers. JUDITH EZEKEIL, *"Women in Northern Ireland."* Through interviews and first-hand descriptions, the effect on women in the Catholic communities of the armed conflict arising out of the defeated Civil Rights Movement is examined at length. Not only have these women continued to maintain daily life under the constant threat of violence, but they have also undertaken a large share of the work for those imprisoned for political activities. In the

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last few years, they have also begun to challenge the traditional male domination and sexist attitudes within the Republican movement. GAIL GREGORY SANSBURY, *"Now, What's the Matter With You Girls?: Clerical Workers Organize."* With a focus on union activities by clerical workers at the University of Rhode Island, many of the conditions and tactics that may facilitate the unionizing of one of the largest unorganized groups in the United States are discussed. In this particular case, the workers were "burned" by their experience in one union, brought in another on their own terms, and in effect created their own organization. The specific needs of women workers were seen as being of primary concern, and were accommodated in the timing and location of meetings. PFM

RADICAL PHILOSOPHY

Care of Noel Parker, Open University, 70 Manchester Road, Chorlton-cum-Hardy, Manchester M21 England. $10 for three issues. CHRIS ARTHUR, *"Personality and the Dialectic of Labor and Property: Locke, Hegel, Marx."* "According to Locke, property is founded on personal labor, according to Hegel it is the expression of the person's will; while, according to Marx it is a realm of estrangement — in it is manifested the alienation of labor." Contrasts Hegel's and Marx's fundamental ontological determinations and deals specifically with Hegel's account of wage-labor in *The Philosophy of Right* and Marx's theory of alienation in his 1844 *Manuscripts*. Concluding remarks attempt to clarify Marx's concept of alienated labor. ROY BHASKAR, *"Scientific Explanation and Human Emancipation."* Connections between explanations in the human sciences and the project of human emancipation are addressed "in the light of the transcendental realist reconstruction of science and the critical naturalism which that reconstruction enables." Positivism is the main target along with the doctrine of the value-neutrality of social science. A rationalistic intellectualism which sees social theory as directly efficacious in practice is also attacked. ROGER WATERHOUSE, *"Heidegger's 'Being and Time.'"* The second of three articles on Heidegger. The first traced his early development while this one analyzes the argument of his most seminal work. The third will consider his later career and assess his philosophy as a whole. PFM

SCIENCE FICTION STUDIES, 23 (March 1981)

Arts Building, McGill University, 853 Sherbrooke St. W., Montreal, Quebec, Canada H3A 2T6. $10 for three issues. Theme: Science Fiction Through H.G. Wells. ROBERT M. PHILMUS, *"The Satiric Ambivalence of the Island of Doctor Moreau."* On Wells' ambivalent exploration of potential bestiality under the veneer of civilization. Focus on how Wells revised his text. DAVID J. LAKE, *"The Whiteness of Griffin and H.G. Wells' Images of Death, 1897-1914."* Emphasis on Wells' color imagery. Whiteness in *The Invisible Man* represents intellectual abstraction, alienation and spiritual death; elsewhere, the sublime purity of a utopian future. WILLIAM J. SCHEICK, *"Towards the Ultra-Science-Fiction Novel: H.G. Wells'* Star Begotten." On a little-known work by Wells as an experiment in open-ended literary structure. MICHAEL TRITT, *"Byron's 'Darkness' and Asimov's 'Nightfall.'"* Comparison of two texts on the fragility of human life. MANFRED NAGL, *"National Peculiarities in German Science Fiction: Science Fiction as a National and Topical Literature."* Looks at chauvinism, militarism, and racism in the science fiction of the German Reich and the current *Perry Rhodan* serial and identifies history-related national characteristics. H.G. WELLS, *"Women and Primitive Culture."* A review article, attributed to Wells for the first time. MARC ANGENOT and NADIA KHOURI, *"An International Bibliography of Prehistoric Fiction."* A lengthy bibliographic contribution to a systematic inquiry into the emergence of human paleontology and the history of fictions about human prehistory. STANISLAW LEM, *"Metafantasia: The Possibilities of Science Fiction."* Translated by Etelka de Laczay and Istvan Csicsery-Ronay from the Hungarian version of the last chapter of Lem's *Science Fiction and Futurology* (in Polish). A section from the most significant and seminal theoretical discussion of science fiction available. DARKO SUVIN, *"Playful Cognizing, or Technical Errors in Harmonyville: The Science Fiction of Johanna and Günter Braun."* A report on an important voice in contemporary East German science fiction, opposing critical humanist socialism to complacent technocracy but with darkening ethical horizons. AIJA OZOLINS, *"Twelve Essays on Frankenstein."* Reviews the delights and disappointments in a new collection of Shelley scholarship. FRANZ ROTTENSTEINER, *"Le Guin's Fantasy."* A critical discussion of Le Guin's writings on science fiction and fantasy, collected in *The Language of the Night*. Both this essay and the one that follows it are unusual in discussions of science fiction's pre-eminent writer in being gently critical of Le Guin and sharply critical of the celebratory one-sidedness of the prevailing scholarly consideration of Le Guin. Here, her writings are credited with more human warmth than depth and her aesthetics favoring the psychological

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novel of character and the myths of fantasy are analyzed as self-deceptions of science fiction and science fiction criticism. JOHN FEKETE, *"Circumnavigating Ursula Le Guin: Literary Criticism and Approaches to Lauding."* A critical discussion of Le Guin secondary literature. Proposes methods and problem areas for a critical agenda. CARLO PAGETTI, *"Recent Italian Criticism on Utopia and Science Fiction."* A review of six new books. Expresses more observations on the quality of science fiction criticism and more admiration for the quality of utopia scholarship. JAF

SCREEN, 21:3 (1980)

29 Old Compton Street, London W1V 5PL, $26 for 4 issues. *Screen* plus *Screen Education*, $34 for four issues. JOHN CAUGHIE, *"Progressive Television and Documentary Drama."* Takes up questions raised in Colin MacCabe's thesis on realism to analyze progressive television drama. Progressiveness on television cannot be a matter simply of integrated or ruptured forms, but must also entail its disruption of ideology. BARRY EDSON, *"Commercial Film Distribution and Exhibition in the UK."* An analysis of the economics of film distribution. STEVE NEALE, *"Oppositional Exhibition Notes and Problems."* A critique of some of the practices of oppositional programming such as structuring seasons around thematic issues, genre, specific directors, booklets, program notes, lectures. GRISELDA POLLOCK, *"Artists, Mythologies and Media Genius, Madness and Art History."* Marxist art historians must analyze how "art history" excludes or displaces questions of history, class and ideology to protect and define the "pure" space of art. Pollock analyzes this process in the representations (in art history, exhibitions and film) of Van Gogh. T.J. CLARK, *"A Note in Reply to Peter Wollen."* Response to Wollen's critique of his *Olympia* article. STEVE NEALE, *"Hollywood Strikes Back: Special Effects in Recent American Cinema."* The new special effects function to reassert cinematic power based in spectacle and its ability to astonish and convince. Plus reviews. PM

THEORY AND SOCIETY, 9:1 (September 1980)

Elsevier Scientific Publishing Co. Inc., 52 Vanderbilt Avenue, New York, NY 10017. $30.75 per year (six issues). A special issue on social history. LOUISE TILLY, CHARLES TILLY, *"Problems in Social History: A Symposium."* A series of short pieces by LOUISE TILLY, EDWARD SHORTER, FRANCIS COUVARES, DAVID LEVINE, and CHARLES TILLY, largely concerned with Judt's desire to reject the trend in historical research that examines the changing patterns of everyday life. Judt advocates a return to the history of social movements. There are some interesting ideas, but a significant part of the symposium is a polemic to defend Tilly's work. MARK TRAUGOTT, *"The Mobile Guard in the French Revolution of 1848."* An examination of two different theories of the lumpen proletariat. The riff-raff theory suggests that the lumpen are marginal yet constantly challenging the existing social order. The "good working class" has a stake in society and remains stable. By contrast, Marx and Engels see the working class as a threat to social stability. Traugott attempts to analyze these two positions by examining the mobile guard in the 1848 revolution. This is a good example of historical research. The second part of this issue is concerned with a symposium on Barrington Moore. SHARON ZUKIN provides an introduction. JAMES J. SHEEHAN, *"Barrington Moore on Obedience and Revolt."* Sheehan's piece provides a good review of Moore's earlier works which he uses to put into perspective his more recent work on the German labor movement. KLAUS TENFELDE, *"German Workers and the Incapacity for Revolution."* A good piece that provides a positive yet critical look at Moore's *Injustice*. RICHARD L. RUBENSTEIN, *"Moral Outrage and False Consciousness."* This piece is unlike the others in that Rubenstein is highly critical of Moore and makes substantial charges that Moore has left out important information that raises questions concerning the fundamental themes in *Justice*. Particularly relevant are the ignoring of anti-Semitism, the difference between National Socialism and fascism and other points. Criticism is also made of Moore's reliance on counter-factual conditionals. ERNEST HELLNER, *"A Russian Marxist Philosophy of History."* A review essay on Y.I. Semyenov, "The Theory of Socio-Economic Formations and World History," in *Soviet and Western Anthropology*, ed. Ernest Gellner. Semyenov's article is a defense of unilinear Marxism, which Gellner strongly supports. RER

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BACK ISSUES STILL AVAILABLE

Also available but not listed here are issues 13 and 17-29. They contain articles by, among others, Adorno, Arato, Aronson, Bloch, Breines, Buck-Morss, Carlo, Castoriadis, Colletti, Dahmer, D'Amico, Elshtain, Fekete, Ferrarotti, George, Goldmann, Gorz, Gouldner, Habermas, Hegedüs, Jacoby, Jay, Korsch, Kosik, Krahl, Landmann, Lefort, Lenhardt, Liehm, Lyotard, Marcuse, Markus, Mattick, Meszaros, Negt, Patocka, Poster, Offe, Radnoti, Schroyer, Tronti, and Ulmen. A complete list of contents for all available back issues is available on request.

30 **CASTORIADIS:** On the History of the Workers' Movement; **BONACCHI:** The Council Communists; **KOVEL:** Therapy in Late Capitalism; **POSTER:** Freud's Concept of the Family; **PATOCKA:** Wars of the 20th Century; **SIEBERT:** Horkheimer's Sociology of Religion; **HEARN:** Toward a Critical Theory of Play; **ENZENSBERGER:** On the Petty Bourgeoisie; **LEFORT:** An Interview

31 **CARLO:** The Oil Crisis; **PICCONE:** From Spaventa to Gramsci; **ADLER:** Gramsci and the Industrialists; **RUTIGLIANO:** Gramsci and Rationalization; **BALDAN:** Gramsci as a Historian; **ADORNO:** The Actuality of Philosophy; **HELLER:** On the New Adventures of the Dialectic; **KOVANDA:** Czechoslovakia in Transition; **FRIEDRICH:** On Brecht and Eisenstein

32 **FEHER, HELLER:** Forms of Equality; **DAHMER:** Psychoanalysis as Social Theory; **BENJAMIN:** Adorno's Social Psychology; **ADORNO:** Music and Technique; **MARKUS:** The Young Lukacs and Culture; **JAY:** Totality in Lukacs and Adorno; **GRAMSCI:** Notes on Journalism; **FOUCAULT:** An Interview; **JAY:** Considerations on Western Marxism

33 **LEE:** Contradictions of Politicization in China; **PAGGI:** Gramsci's Theory of Marxism; **SCHMIDT:** Kosik's Political Theory; **KOSIK:** Dialectic of Morality; **RYBALKA ET AL.:** Nouvelle Philosophie; **JAN:** Notes on Socialist Planning and its Discontents; **BERMAN:** Theater Workshop in Bergamo; **CARLO, MELOTTI:** In Memory of Bruno Rizzi

34 **GOULDNER:** Stalinism as Internal Colonialism; **CASTORIADIS:** French Leftists; **JACOBY:** Politics of Objectivity; **CARLO:** Imperialism, Monopoly, Inflation; **SIEBERT:** Fromm's Theory of Religion; **NEGT:** Misery of Democracy in Germany; **ZIPES:** Berufsverbot and Terrorism; **ZUKIN:** On Self-Management; **BERMAN:** Adorno, Marxism, Art; **GROSS:** On Irony

35 **BOBBIO:** Is There a Marxist Theory of the State? **BOBBIO:** Alternatives to Representative Democracy; **FEHER:** Dictatorship over Needs; **PICCONE:** Crisis of One Dimensionality; **LUKE:** The Age of Artificial Negativity; **ARATO:** Bureaucratic Centralism; **D'AMICO:** Desire and the Commodity Form; **ADORNO:** On the Social Situation of Music; **ADORNO:** Resignation

36 **BOOKCHIN:** Beyond Neo-Marxism; **LEFORT:** Then and Now; **BOBBIO:** Why Democracy? **GEORGE:** On Contradiction; **CARLO:** Capitalism and Crisis in Yugoslavia; **DAHMER:** Sexual Economy Today; **GROSS:** Culture and Negativity; **MONGIN:** Questioning Politics; **HOWARD:** 'Esprit'

37 **KOVEL:** Rationalization and the Family; **MILLER:** Nietzsche and Marx; **EWEN:** Americanized Consumption; **TSCHIRHART:** Chinese Asexuality; **RADNOTI:** Benjamin's Politics; **TRAUB:** Lenin and Taylor; **ADORNO:** Culture and Administration; **BOELLA:** Radicalism and Needs in Heller

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BACK ISSUES STILL AVAILABLE

38 **CARLO:** Unemployment; **CASTORIADIS:** The Social Regime in Russia; **KONRAD, SZELENY:** Intelligentsia and the Social Structure; **LEVI:** Sources of Wittgenstein's Ethics; **ADORNO:** Metacritique of Epistemology; **VAJDA:** Lukacs' and Husserl's Critique of Science; **SALVADORI:** Eurocommunism; **MARCUSE ET AL.:** Theory and Politics; **HELLER:** Marxist Ethics and Eastern Europe

39 **HABERMAS:** History and Evolution; **HONNETH:** Adorno and Habermas; **SCHMIDT:** Offensive Critical Theory? **REED:** Black Particularity Reconsidered; **ROELOFS:** The Warren Court and Corporate Capitalism; **FEHER:** Lukacs in Weimar; **BEILHARZ:** Trotsky's Marxism — Permanent Involution? **BIRO:** The Plan to Film 'Capital'; **HABERMAS:** Capitalism and Democracy: An Interview

40 **ZASLAVSKY:** Rebirth of the Stalin Cult in the USSR; **FEHER:** Kadarism as the Model State of Khrushchevism; **NERI:** The Czech Crisis; **WHITEBOOK:** Nature in Habermas; **COHEN:** Why More Political Theory? **ADLER:** Thalheimer, Bonapartism and Fascism; **THALHEIMER:** On Fascism; **KLARE:** Law-Making as Praxis; **TERTULIAN:** On the Later Lukacs

41 **BOOKCHIN:** Self-Management and Technology; **FINOCCHIARO:** Gramsci's Crocean Marxism; **WILDT:** Totalitarian State Capitalism; **BOELLA:** Eastern European Societies; **STOJANOVIC:** Democratization in Yugoslavia; **RITTERSPORN:** Conflict in the USSR 1936-38; **WOLIN:** On Adorno's Aesthetische Theorie; **HEYDORN:** Gustav Landauer

42 **ZASLAVSKY:** The USSR and the Working Class; **MLYNAR:** From Prague to Moscow; **FEHER:** Toward a Post-Machiavellian Politics; **CARLO:** The Italian Crisis and the Left; **CLARK:** Marx, Bakunin and Social Transformation; **FAULET:** Remarks on Horkheimer's Pessimism; **COLLETTI:** The Three Faces of Italian Communism; **BERMAN:** German Notes; **LOHMANN:** Society versus the State; **SARTRE ET AL.:** Discussion

43 **CARLO:** The Crisis of Bureaucratic Collectivism; **COBLER:** The Determinate Assertion of Normalcy; **WOLIN:** An Aesthetic of Redemption; **CASTORIADIS:** Socialism and Autonomous Society; **McNALL:** Greece and the Common Market; **MAHAIRA-ODONI:** Reply to McNall; **ADORNO:** Music and the New Music; **ZASLAVSKY:** Why Afghanistan? **GREFFRATH ET AL.:** Conversations with Wittfogel; **MELOTTI:** Socialism and Bureaucratic Collectivism

44 **LASCH, ARONOWITZ, EWEN, ALT, PICCONE, HEARN, JACOBY, KOVEL, ELSHTAIN:** Symposium on Narcissism; **LEVY ET AL.:** Tributes to Sartre; **ZUKIN:** Beyond Titoism; **LOWY:** Marcuse and Benjamin; **PACHTER:** Brecht's Politics; **JANIK:** Wittgenstein's Ethics; **HABERMAS:** On the German-Jewish Heritage

45 **JAY, HABERMAS, HELLER, GROSS, FEHER, LUDKE, SAYRE:** Tribute to Lowenthal; **FEHER:** Eastern Europe in the 1980s; **JACOBY:** Conformist Marxism; **ZASLAVSKY:** Ethnicity in the USSR; **MOUZELIS:** Reductionism in Marxist Theory; **LAYTON, PAPKE:** Towards a Non-Sexist Society

46 **RITTERSPORN:** Stalin in 1938; **CASTORIADIS:** Facing the War; **CARLO:** The Crisis of the State in the 1930s; **SCHMIDT:** Recent Hegel Literature; **KOGAWA:** Adorno's Strategy of Hibernation; **HOFENER:** Sparks, Insanity, Fireworks; **WOODS:** Black Politics in the '80s; **D'AMICO, KIM, PICCONE:** Marvin Farber (1901-1980); **BRONNER:** Tribute to Henry Pachter (1907-1980)

47 **ARATO:** Civil Society vs. the State; **BAUMAN:** The Maturation of Socialism; **CARLO:** Afghanistan, Poland, Detente; **MICHNIK:** Hopes and Realities; **POMIAN:** Miracle in Poland; **MAZOWIECKI:** Solidarity's Task; **WOJCICKI:** The Reconstruction of Society; **DAMUS:** Strike Cycles in Poland; **SVITAK:** Comparisons; **SWIDLICKI:** Struggle for the Media; **MINK:** Public Opinion and Power in Poland;

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